

Ποιμὴν φυλάκιον.

The Pastors Charge,
AND THE
Peoples Duty.

A
S E R M O N

(for the most part) Preached at the
Assembly of Ministers

A T
E X O N

June 7. 1693.

By *Samuel Stoddon.*

Ezek. 34. 2.

הוֹי יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ יָעִים
אֹתָם הִלַּא הֵצֵא יָרְעוּ הָרוּעִים

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T O

My Reverend and Dearly Beloved Brethren, the United Ministers of Christ in the County of Devon; Grace and Peace in, and from our our LORD Jesus Christ.

Reverend Brethren,

IN compliance with your Affectionate Importunity, and Obedience to your Acknowledged Authority, I now humbly offer you, what few others in the World, but your selves could have wrested from me. I confess it hath always been accounted an Ill Omen, when the Victim comes unwillingly to the Al-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

tar: But Conscience can avouch this for me, That I have not come unwillingly to any Work, wherein I have had a prospect of serving the glorious Ends of my Ministry. 'Twas your Unanimous Vote, that laid the Injunction of this Pulpit-work upon me; to which (though conscious of my own Unfitness) I readily enough yielded. But when, after my utmost Endeavours to prevent it, you so irresistibly desired its Publication, I could not but be troubled. Yet not from any sullen Aversion to the Press, as the Over-modest Humour of some is, that are eminently better qualified to serve the Churches of Christ that way; but from the unpreparedness of the Discourse for Publick View, and the little Time or Strength that I have to fit it better.

It being, for the most part, Sermo ad Clerum; and willing to speak a little, as I could, to what my Text
so

The Epistle Dedicatory.

so naturally directed me to, I took the liberty to offer you the bare Skeliton, without those Exegetical or Inculcative Enlargements, which, in a ruder Auditory, might have been more necessary.

Wherefore now (not without your leave) I presume to present it both to You, and to the World, in a second Edition, with a few, and but a few Additions, and necessary Variations; whether for the better or the worse, I cannot tell. I did once hope to have buried it in the faithful Ears and Hearts of my then present Auditors, and never have concerned my Pen any further about it. But seeing it is your pleasure to send it further abroad, you have made yourselves Sponsors with me, for all the Infirmities. and Faults of it; and have given me the Confidence now, to Claim the concurrence of your Prayers; That God will pardon the many Defects,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

fects, and prosper the good Design of it; to his own Glory, and the Spiritual Good of all those, into whose hands it shall come. And which is the fervent Desire of,

*Sidbury,
August 15.
1693.*

Your unworthy Brother and
Fellow-Servant in the
Gospel of Christ,

S. S.

THE

I

T H E
Pastor's Charge,
A N D
The Peoples Duty.

John 21. 15, 16, 17.

—— *Feed my Lambs.*

—— *Feed my Sheep.*

—— *Feed my Sheep.*

C A P. I.

The Text opened.

MY Reverend and Dear Brethren ! Unto us these words are spoken ; unto whom they were first, and immediately directed ; by whom ; on what occasion ; and with what Argument they are enforced, I need not tell you : The bare Reading

these three Verses at length, will make all this plain and obvious to the meanest Understanding.

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him; yea LORD; thou knowest I that love thee. He saith unto him; Feed my Lambs.

He saith to him again the second time; Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him; yea LORD; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him; Feed my Sheep.

He saith unto him the third time; Simon, Son of Jonas; lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time; lovest thou me? And he said unto him, LORD, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee: Jesus saith unto him; Feed my Sheep.

You see 'twas our LORD Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, and whose Own they are, that spake these words with his own mouth, and left

left this thrice inculcated *Charge* with his Disciple *Peter*, unto whom in the name of all the rest, he was wont to direct his speeches, not as *Princeps*, but as * *Primus Apostolorum*; and with whom, all the other, not only of his then present Brethren; but of all their future Successors

* This notion will need a little explanation in a more proper place.

in the same Office, were included. And this after his Resurrection from the Grave, wherein he had paid the full Price of our Redemption; and having laid down his Life for his *Sheep*, had victoriously triumphed over his and their last Enemy *Death*, and was now about to leave the World, and go to the Father. And knowing that he must leave his poor *Flock*, whom he had purchased at so dear a Rate, in the midst of the *Wolves* and wild Beasts of this *Wilderness*; he thus charges his Servants concerning them, unto whom he committed the Care and Over-sight of them; *Feed my Lambs; Feed my Sheep*. And, lest this should be too little, he strengthens his *Charge* with the most obliging Argument, that could possibly be urg'd;

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* This notion will need a little explication in a more proper place.

Lovest thou me? And this three times repeated; which argues an extraordinary Earnestness, and particular Emphasis, that he would put upon it. There are some, that think this was three times repeated in personal reflection on *Peter*, for his thrice denying him; and perhaps there may be something in that: But what was said to *Peter*, was said to all the *Rest*, both *Them* and *Us*; and his thrice repeating it, was but to let us know, how dear his little *Flock* was to him; what Jealousie he had for them, lest they should be neglected; and what an Account he will require of us concerning them in the Day of our Accounts.

And here, if I may not be thought too curiously to criticize upon the *Text*, I would observe these two things in it.

The Order	} Of the Charge.
The Matter	

I. *The Order.* We see the *Lambs* are first mentioned, then the *Sheep*. Though these Names are sometimes, in Scripture, pro-

promiscuously used; yet in propriety of speech, there is a difference, though not of *Kind*, yet of *Age* at least; and the *Terms* are not convertible. Though all *Lambs* are *Sheep*, all *Sheep* are not properly called *Lambs*. And where we find both words used, as in the *Text*, it plainly intimates a distribution of the *Flock* into these two constituting parts of it.

By the *Lambs* here, I understand only what the plain use of the *Metaphor* directs to; viz. the Younger sort; Younger, either in respect of *Years*, or in respect of *Grace*. And why are these first mentioned? Some use may be made of this; though not that use, which *Bellarmine* foolishly and falsely suggests. But they may be first nam'd in our LORD's Charge to us.

1. Because they are the *weaker part* of the *Flock*; which doth by so much the more recommend them to our tenderest Care and Inspection: They are worst able to defend, or provide for themselves; they are weak in Judgment, and weak in Experience; and weak things are soon lost. Therefore especial

cial provision must be made for them.

2. They are first in the *Charge*, because they are first in the *Order of Nature*. They are *Lambs* before they are *Sheep*; and herein they seem to claim a precedence. Therefore first, *Feed my Lambs*.

3. They are *Spes Gregis*; *The Hope of the Flock*. Though the weaker, yet commonly the sounder part; though the more Ignorant, yet the more Teachable. O Sirs! if we lose them while they are *Lambs*, 'twill be hard, perhaps too late to cure or recover them, when they are grown more wild, or more rotten. The greatest hope of the success of our work lies here. But where common Experience says so much, I need say the less.

4. They are *Fundamentum Gregis*. By whom the Stock is maintained, and a Succession preserved in the Earth. The *Seminary* and common *Fund* of the Church. To lose the *Lambs*, is the ready way to lose all.

5. They are the most *Innocent* part of the Flock. There is a kind of *sophy*, an innate Principle of Dearness and

and Affection in every ingenuous Breast for such as these. *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child?* She will sooner forget all the rest, than her Little one. He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd; he shall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young, *Isa. 40. 11.* This was spoken of Him, by whom the words of my Text were spoken. No wonder then that he takes the first care for these. Yet though the *Lambs* are first, we find them but once mentioned in the Text; but the *Sheep* twice. Is it because the *Sheep* are more in number, or more in value? or doth it not seem rather to tell us; That though the *Lambs* call for our first Care; the *Sheep* are they that cost us double Labour? while they are young and tender, they are more ductile, and teachable; their Minds are a *Tabula rasa*, not prepossessed with Opinion or Prejudice; their Affections green and complying, and not actually preingag'd; their Consciences untoucht in their natural Virginity: I do not say in their Original Purity. But when they are grown up, and have imbib'd

imbib'd a few Religious Notions, and are grown fond of them; or have profelyted themselves to a Party; how hard is it convince them, or to rectifie their Errours in Judgment? When they have tasted the sensual sweets of sin; or intangled their hearts in the Cares of the World, or espoused their Christian Profession to a Carnal Interest; or, under a Form of Godliness, are come to settle in their *Lees*; O how hard, and next to impossible is it then to move them? when stray'd among the wild Beasts, to reclaim them? when rotten, to recover them? Here's double Labour with these.

Or else they are twice mentioned, because they are capable of Pastoral Inspection, in one point beyond what the Lambs are. Of which I shall take a little notice in the next. Thus much for the *Order* of the Charge.

2. We are next to consider the *Matter* of it: Wherein I shall not use the old Logical Terms of dividing; but briefly take notice of the *Charge* it self; and the *Argument*, that is here used to enforce it.

1. The

I. The Charge is ; *Feed my Lambs, and my Sheep.* My Lambs, βόσκα τὰ ἀγρία μὲν. My Sheep, βόσκα καὶ ποιμαίνε τὰ οἰκίστα μὲν. I would not *querere nodum in Scirpo*, seek for Subtilties, where the Text neither intends, nor needs any. I know the words are often synonymously used ; yet if we look into their *Etymology*, we shall find some difference ; and which, to me, seems to be designed here ; βόσκειν signifies only to feed, so as to make fat, *saginare* ; but ποιμαίνειν, is not only to feed, but to rule and govern ; to exercise the Office ; not only the Care, but the Power of a Shepherd over his Flock. So then, here's the Reason of what I just now hinted at. The *Lambs* are but once mentioned ; and the Charge concerning them is only to *Feed* them ; these being not capable of Pastoral Discipline and Government. But with the *Sheep*, there's the double labour, both of *Feeding and Ruling*.

I shall not now trouble you with the *Popish* Questions, that have been controverted on this Text, as being alien to the design and proper work of

of this Day. Only let me say again ; That what was here spoken to *Peter*, was spoken to every one of the other Apostles ; wherein both They, and We, that have succeeded them in their ordinary Work and Office of the Ministry, are personally and equally concerned. And though the *Lambs* and the *Sheep* make up the whole Church of Christ upon Earth ; it cannot be understood, that the Church *Oecumenical* was here committed to the Charge of every, or of any one individual Pastor ; such a Work being loaded with Moral Impossibility. But the Charge, being given personally and particularly, it must be understood of the Church *Congregational* ; that is, that Part, or Congregation of the Church, whereunto every one is particularly, and according to Gospel Order, called, and set as Pastor, or Over-seer. Thus you have the Charge it self.

2. Here's the Argument, wherewith our Saviour enforces it ; which is three-fold.

1. The *Relations* he hath to them : They are *My Lambs*, and *My Sheep*.
Mine,

Mine, whom you call your LORD, and your Master ; yea, your Redeemer, and your Saviour : Therefore feed them for my sake.

2. The *Propriety* he hath in them : They are *Mine*, and not *Yours* ; the work of my hands, the Lot of my Inheritance, the Objects of my Care and Delight, the Price of my Blood, and the Fruit of the Travel of my Soul ; for whose sakes it is, that I have thus humbled my self : Therefore take heed how you neglect the least of them.

3. The other part of the Argument is concomitant to the Text ; *Lovest thou me ? q. d.* If thou lovest me, as thou professest to do ; shew thy Love to Me, in thy Care of Mine. Let my poor *Lambs* tast the Fruits of my Love in thee. Let my *Sheep* be assur'd that thou lovest Me, by thy Love to Them. It is like a careful and prudent Husband's passionate recommending the Care and Rule of his dear Children and Family, when about to leave them by Death ; or a long Journey to his beloved Wife. If ever you had any
Love

Love for me; if these Children be mine, as I believe them to be, see that you carry your self in all respects as becomes a discreet and loving Parent towards them: Take my Estate; fill up my room, and discharge the Offices of my Relation to them; and let them want nothing, for my sake. This is that which is wont to be used as the last and most overcoming Argument amongst dearest Friends. If you love me, do so, or so: a kind of adjuring them by all the Bonds of Love and Friendship that are between them.

And now, Sirs, you see, here's a Foundation for a much larger Discourse, than time or strength will at present bear. I shall contract my self into as narrow a Circle, as I am able, that I may not too far transgress the Bounds assigned me.

C A P. II.

*The Doctrinal Proposition Stated and
Cleared.*

THIS practical Text appears to be very pregnant of practical Doctrine; which might be distributed into several Branches. But he that studies brevity, must avoid all unnecessary division. I shall offer but these three.

Proposition I. *That Believers are Christs own mystical Flock, and He their great Shepherd.*

Prop. II. *That the Ministers of the Gospel are they, to whom the L O R D Jesus Christ hath committed the Care and Rule of this his mystical Flock.*

Prop. III. *That a Ministers want of Care and Concern for the Flock of Christ, is an indication of the want of Love to Christ himself.*

Either

Either of these singly, would fill up more time than is allotted me for this Action. The second *Proposition* is that, wherein the stream of the *Text* seems to run; and unto which both the other will, without forcing, come in to its Improvement. Wherefore I shall lay down this for the *Basis* and *Bound* of my following Discourse.

That the Ministers of the Gospel are they, to whom the LORD Jesus Christ hath committed the Care and Rule of his Mystical Flock.

In the Prosecution of this Truth, I shall briefly answer these four Questions.

1. What this *Flock* is, concerning which this charge is given, or, who they are, whom our LORD would have us to understand by *His Lambs*, and *His Sheep*?

2. Why these Names of *Lambs*, and *Sheep* are given them?

3. Who the *Ministers of the Gospel* are, with whom this charge is left?

4. What the *Duty* is that is required of them; or what our dear LORD
and

and Master would have us to understand by Feeding them? And then shall conclude all with some useful Inferences, both to Ministers and People.

Quest. 1. What this Flock is, concerning which this Charge is given; or whom our LORD would have us to understand by His Lambs, and His Sheep?

Sol. The Question needs not many words. The general sense of this common Scriptural Metaphor is obvious. But that which makes the question, is that distinguishing (if it be here a distinguishing) Relative *My Sheep*, *Mat. 25. 32, 33.* We have there all the World divided into two sorts, *Sheep* and *Goats*, i. e. Believers and Unbelievers. Wherefore by *Sheep*, in that Scripture, and with whom the *Lambs* are also included, being oppos'd to the *Goats*, we may understand no other than true Believers. The sound and sincere part of Professors which is no larger than the Church Invisible. These indeed are *His Sheep* in the most proper and peculiar sense. But that the Word in the Text must not be
so

so restrain'd, is certain ; because our Commission would then be unintelligible, and lose its ends ; it being impossible for us to be assur'd, who are the *Sheep*, and who the *Goats*, till the Judgment of the Great Day determine and reveal it. Who then are *My Lambs*, and *My Sheep* ? If I may expound my Text by that of *Matth. 28. 19.* the question will well-nigh be answered. *Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations.* That *Teaching* here, is the same with *Feeding* in the Text, I suppose will be granted. *All Nations*, *i. e.* those of all, and of any Nation, that are willing to receive the Gospel, and to be taught by you. And that all Nations are *His*, both as Creator and Redeemer, I hope will not be denied. But then, how are *all Nations* call'd *His Sheep*, and *His Lambs* ? I have already said, that all Nations, are those of the Nations, that would receive the Gospel ; of which sort Christ hath had some in all Nations. Besides, many of those that are not actually his Sheep, are Potentially and Electively so. The extent of the Commission and Command seems to run thus. Feed all those, both
 Young

Young and Old, that will be fed by you; of what Nation, or Countrey, or Place soever they be; that those that are not yet actually my Sheep, may be made so, and then cared and provided for as such. This is the general Call of the Gospel. *If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink*, Joh. 7. 37. *And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*, Joh. 6. 37. All that will, may, and must be fed. But yet, not all alike. As there are *Babes*, and *Strong Men* in Gods House; so there is *Milk* and *stronger Meat*, that which will cherish one, will choak another. All Ordinances may not be indifferently administred unto all. In the Old Temple, there was the Inner and the Outer Court; so there is in the New. But this being a matter of Order and Discipline, may be recogniz'd in a more proper place. This little may now be enough to be said on this first question.

Quest. 2. *Why are these names of Lambs, and Sheep given them?*

Sol. We find 'tis a Metaphor, that the

the Spirit of God in Scripture delights much in. Were it expedient, 'twere easie enough to illustrate the Analogy in many particulars; But that it becomes not the present occasion. I shall but suggest these two general Reasons.

1. To mind us what we are of our selves.
2. To teach us what we should be.

I. To mind us what we are of our selves.

Franz. Histor. The *Sheep*, as one observes, is of all Cattel the most silly,
Animal Sacr. Fearful, Weak, and Unprovided for self-defence; none so subject to Diseases, and to be Infected of one another. Nor any other Creature more apt to go astray, or so unapt to return, without the help and care of the Shepherd. No other kind of perfect *Animal* so unable to subsist, and to preserve it's *Species* in the Earth, without the care and conduct of Man, as is the poor *Sheep*; therefore no other Metaphor more proper to express the Nature and Condition of the Church of Christ in the World by; which without

out the Wisdom, Power, Providence, Faithfulness, Love, and All-sufficiency of our Heavenly *Shepherd*, the L O R D Jesus Christ, must inevitably and eternally perish.

2. 'Tis to teach us what we should be. The *Sheep*, you know, is that Creature, which was of old, in a more especial manner dedicated to God, and offered to him in Sacrifice; and made a Type of Christ, our great Propitiatory Sacrifice. The first Offering to the L O R D, that we find honour'd with his Acceptance, was that of *Abel*, of the *Firstlings of his Flock*, Gen. 4. 4. Besides, the *Sheep* is a Creature, not only Ceremonially clean, but is naturally cleanly, and delights not in the Mire and Dirt as the *Sow*. 'Tis a Meek, Innocent, Patient Creature, and us'd as a common Emblem of Patience. 'Tis one of the most profitable of Cattel; of which there is nothing, but is, one way or other, useful to all the purposes of humane Life. And, which is very remarkable, they have a natural Instinct of vehement Love and Regard for their

*Pastores suos
vehementer
amant. Fr. ib.*

own *Shepherd*; as if they were Conscious of their own weakness and need of him. The bare mention of these things being enough to direct the Spiritual Mind to their due application, I shall wave all manner of further enlargement here.

Quest. 3. The Third Question is this. *Who the Ministers of the Gospel are, with whom this Charge of our dear Saviour is left?*

Sol. One would think, the Solution of such a Question as this, should not be hard; nor is it so *in Thesi*, wherein the clear light both of Scripture and of Nature, is so concurring and convincing. And yet we find there is hardly any one thing, wherein Professors (such of them as are too apt to be led by the factious Principles of Ignorance and Prejudice) are more uncharitably disagreed in, than in this. How miserably the poor Church of Christ, by the malice and subtilties of the common Enemy, and the Carnality, Pride, and blind Passions of Professors,
is

is torn into Rags of Divisions and Subdivisions, is too well known, for me to inform you. And of all these, every Party is magnifying their own Teachers, as the only Ministers of Christ; and ready to condemn all others as Hirelings, False Teachers, Schismatical Intruders, &c. This is a Lamentation, and let it be for a Lamentation. But could we return to a right Understanding of our plain rule in this Affair, how easily might the Case be brought to its due Issue? I know but these two things, that essentially denominate a Man to be a Minister of Jesus Christ:

Qualification, and
Commission.

And neither of which is singly sufficient. I am sensible, that I am now in a large Field, and in a ready way to be lost in Controversy; but that I have more practical and necessary work before me. Yet, I beseech you, bear with me, while I explain my self a little on these two heads; and I will be very short, the Truth being commonly best seen in a few plain words.

1. There must be *Qualifications*. But what? Of special, sanctifying, saving Grace? This indeed is needful, and most desireable, and morally conducive to the happy and glorious ends of the Ministry, both as to our selves, and those that hear us; absolutely necessary as the *sine quâ non*, unto Salvation; but not so to Ministerial Qualification. A man may be lawfully a Minister, that is not Spiritually a Member of Christ. The Sealed of the Tribe of *Levi* were but a Remnant, as of, any one of the other Tribes. Those that in our Saviour's Time, sat in *Moses's* Chair, were, for the most part of them, far enough from *Moses's* Spirit; and yet our Saviour owns them in their Office. *Judas* was a Disciple, and sent forth with a Commission to Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, even by Him, who knew him to be inwardly a Devil and a Traitor. But this is no new Doctrine, nor needs any proof to one that has not a mind to be contentious. But the *Qualification* here required, as absolutely necessary, is *Ministerial*. That whereby a Person is competently fitted

fitted for the discharge of all the work and duties of this sacred Office, Orthodoxy in Doctrine, ability and aptness in (at least) the gift of Preaching and Praying; skill and moderation in ruling, &c. And certainly there's a great difference between Ministerial Gifts, and Saving Grace. I shall not now instance in the particulars of this qualification: but refer you to *Paul's Directions to Timothy*, 1 *Epist.* ch. 3. and to *Titus* ch. 1.

2. *There must be Commission.* No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron, Heb. 5. 4. No man taketh ἐχ' αὐτοῦ πικραίναντες. No man undertaketh, accepteth, or assumeth to himself, and of himself; that is, no man ought, or can without Sin, any way take, or receive this Honour, or usurp this Office, but he that is called of God, that is delegated and commissioned by Gods Authority, and in the way of Gods appointment; tho' not in that immediate and extraordinary manner as Aaron was, unless in like extraordinary cases; yet by a Power and Dispensation, legally, and orderly de-

rived from him, through such Hands as he hath appointed and impower'd to this end. Qualification without Commission makes not a Minister of Jesus Christ; but such a thing, as he calls a *Thief* and a *Robber*, a *Sacrilegious Intruder*; such as were *Corah* and his *Complices*; and such, as are too many in our days. And Commission without Qualification, makes what the Prophet calls an *Idol-shepherd*, or *Dumb-Dog*, a *Blind Guide*. And who are they that have right authoritatively to examine and judge of Qualification, or to convey Commission to others, for the Conservation of a Succession in this sacred Office, but those that are themselves both duely Qualified and Commissionated? And that too not singly, privately, or arbitrarily; but according to the Rules given in this matter, by and from our supream L O R D and Master Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Methinks this should not amount to a Question, with any that have but read the Holy Scriptures, and own their Truth and Authority: or that have not abandon'd the conduct of common reason

son; by whose light it is easie to see the equity and expediency of the Scripture directions in this case.

Quest. 4. We are now come to the last Question. *What the duty is, that is required of them? Or, What our dear LORD and Master would have us to understand by Feeding his Lambs, and his Sheep?*

Sol. The Flock, you see, is divided into two parts; the Lambs, and the Sheep. So is the Ministerial Work that concerns them. *Feed, and Rule*, both which are equally, and inseparably enjoined parts of this work, as appears in several very plain Scriptures, *1 Tim. 5. 17.* *Let the Elders that rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour, or they labouring, i. e. on the account of their labouring in Word and Doctrine,* οἱ καλῶς προϊστάμενοι διπλῆς τιμῆς ἀξιώσασθαι μάλιστα οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ. This is a Text that hath been sufficiently vext by men of different Sentiments and Interests. I know no reason we have, from this Scripture, to infer two distinct Orders

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of

of Ruling and Teaching Presbyters ; seeing what is mention'd here, both of Ruling and Labouring in Word and Doctrine, are but the essential and required Functions of one and the same Sacred Order and Office ; than which, I am not concerned at present to look any further into any Truths, that are plainly enough stated in it, or any questions, that have been vainly enough started on it. And with which, there are several other Scriptures that agree in the same *Hypothesis*, 1 Thes. 5. 12. *We beseech you Brethren, to know them, which labour among you, and are over you in the LORD, and admonish you.* Here are the same words applied to the same Persons and Things, *ἐπιστάμενοι*, that are over you, or set and appointed over you in the LORD, i. e. according to the LORD, and in the things of the LORD, to rule in his Church ; and who they are, but the *νομάζοντες ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ καθεστέντες*, those that labour among you, and admonish you ? So Heb. 13. 7. Those that Rule are the same with those that Preach the Word, and ver. 17. They are said to Watch for Souls ; which as it may imply other work, so
it

it must import Preaching the Word ; in which sense the word is ordinarily used in Scripture: And here the *Rulers* and the *Watch-men* are the same. Many other Texts there are that freely offer to avouch this Truth ; but these are enough to prove what I aim at: That the work of a Minister of Christ, is both to *Teach*, and to *Govern* the People committed to his charge. And he that is not fit to Govern, is not worthy to Teach them.

But to obviate any scandalous Reflexions, that Ignorance or Envy may make on this Position, and Claim of our Governing Power in the House of God, which is his Church: We heartily declare our Abhorrence of all those Popish Tenets and Pretensions, which are any way derogatory to the just Power and Authority of the Civil Government, under which we live, and unto which we profess our cheerful and constant Obedience, both as Men, and as Christians. Our Spiritual Government of God's Spiritual Kingdom, in our respective Charges, being no more prejudicial to that of Temporal

poral States and Kingdoms, than is the Despotical, which is the Natural Right of every Family. Yea, so far from prejudicial, that it is accumulative, both of their Honour and Security; as the Experience both of the Primitive, and of the best Reformed Churches have unquestionably proved; and which might, in many particular Instances (were it necessary) be demonstrated. From what hath been now thus briefly said, I conclude this Question: That *Feed my Lambs*, and *my Sheep*, implies these two things, *Teach them*, and *Rule them*: wherein the whole works of the Ministerial Office is included. But to tell you how they must be taught, and how they ought to be ruled, will need much more time than is here allotted me, or is now convenient for me to take. Yet this being the Main of my Errand to you, something must be spoken to it, as time and strength will serve, in the Applicatory part, to which I now proceed.

C A P. III.

*The Doctrine improved by way of
Instruction.*

THIS *Doctrine* would be useful, more ways than I shall be able now to apply it. Yet give me leave to suggest some of the more necessary things, under these three general Heads.

Instruction.

Exhortation.

Encouragement.

1. By way of *Instruction*; and that in these eight particulars.

1. In the *Right* and *Propriety*, that Christ hath in his Church. They are his own Sheep, Joh. 10. 3. 4. No Shepherd in the World ever had, or can have that absolute, undefeasible, supreme, independent, and natural *Propriety* in his Flock, as Christ hath in his. They are *His*, both as God, and
as

as Redeemer. His by right of Creation, Donation, Purchase, Regeneration; and their own voluntary Choice and Self-dedication. His Portion, His Inheritance, His peculiar Treasure. Nothing is nearer, nothing dearer to him than they. His Mark and his Name is upon them; his Spirit, his Nature, his Image, his Glory shines in them. The Scripture is full of his Claims to them; and by which they are distinguish'd and separate from all the rest of the World, *Joh. 15. 19.* And this is the ground of that Caution, *1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. Feed the Flock of God, which is among you—Neither as bearing Lords over God's Heritage.* *Μηδ' ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῆ κλήρου.* Ruling, but not Domineering; Governing, but not Tyrannizing, *more Regio imperantes;* as Deputies and Rulers in trust, not as Lords and Kings. *Non Regnum, sed Cura Presbyteris commissa est;* because they are not *Yours*, but *God's Heritage*, his *Clergy*; whether Ministers or People; for the word, in the use, as well as derivation of it, reaches both. Church-Tyranny is an Encroachment upon Christ's peculiar Right. To Rule with a Lordly Grandeur,

Grandeur, with Rigour, or Arbitrariness, to Monopolize the Power, which ought to be more equally distributed, is very injurious, not only to the Flock, but to him, who is the LORD of it, and whose Servants and Stewards we profess our selves to be. And, which is a guilt that the proudest *He* upon Earth will not have the hardiness to own before his Judge another day.

2. In the tender *Affection* and *Care* he hath for them. Nothing is more apt to endear a thing to us, than *Propriety*. That which is our own, we love; though it be not as it should be, nor as we wish, yet because 'tis our own. And those that do otherwise, ~~are~~ justly reckoned among the *ἀσέβοι*, without natural *Affection*, and worse than Infidels. But should I begin to tell you, what dearness of *Affection* the LORD Jesus Christ hath for his poor little Flock, where should I end? Eternity will be little enough, with admiration and praise to recount the glorious Soul-ravishing Instances of this Love. He loved them so, as to leave

leave the Eternal Throne of his Glory, and the sweet Repose he had from Everlasting in the Bosom of the Father, for them: So, as to humble and abase himself to the vile Rags of our Humane Nature; to the Miseries and Necessities of an indigent life; to the proud Scorns, and blasphemous Indignities of a wicked, and horridly ungrateful World; to the foul Temptations and Buffetings of Satan; to the imputation of Sin, the only thing so abhorrent to his pure and sinless Nature; to the Bondage, Obedience and Curse of the Law; to the Wrath of God, which he never in the least, for himself deserved; and which, to any one else, would have been utterly unsupportable; to the most ignominious, torturous and accursed Death of the Cross; and to the power of Death, his own Servant and common Executioner, for a time. And all this his Love to them overcame, and sweetened to him. Yea, and having loved them, he loves them still, and will love them to the end, yea, without end. And therefore delights to speak of them
always.

always with some Intimations of their dearness to him; as his Friends, his Brethren, his Children, his Lambs, his Spouse, his Members, &c. for all which I had no need to quote you the Scriptures. And as is his Love to them; so is his Care of, and Provision for them. When he saw it expedient for them to depart from them, as to his bodily presence, and to leave them here in a Militant state, exposed to the Rage of his and their Enemies, both Temporal and Infernal; to be hated, and tempted, and persecuted to the death for his sake; O how did his Soul pity them! with what compassion did he embrace them! and seal his unchangeable Love to them! what a stream of endearing Affection and Care doth there run thro' his parting Discourses with them! *Joh. 14. 15. and 16.* How sweetly doth he counsel and comfort them there! and is so concerned for them, that he seems to take no care for himself! though he knew that dreadful Hour was now come, wherein that Wrath must be poured out upon him, which none but the Omnipotent could stand

stand under ! And then how affectionately doth he recommend them to his Father ! *Chap. 17.* Leaves his written Word, his sealing Ordinances, and his Ordained Ministers, whom he strictly charges with them ; yea, gives his holy Angels a charge concerning them ; sends his Holy Spirit, as a Sanctifier, and a Comforter to them ; goes before, to prepare a Place for them ; Negotiates all their Affairs, as a Faithful, Powerful and Prevalent Intercessor with the Father, in their Names and Nature ; and assures them, that he will come again, and in due time receive them into the Eternal Possession of his own Glory and Joy, with Himself and the Father in Heaven ; and in the mean time will, in an invisible manner, be with them alway, even unto the end of the Word !

וְאֵלֶּיךָ *Homo mortal*
 וְאֵלֶּיךָ *is & Miser.*
Rad. secundum
Enseb. וְאֵלֶּיךָ ob-
livisci.

L O R D ! what is
 * *Enosh*, wretched,
 worthless, guilty, sin-
 ful *Man*, that so for-
 gets Thee, and deserves
 to be for ever forgotten
 of thee, that thou art

very mindful of him ?

3. That

3. *That the Ministers of the Gospel, i. e.* Those that are duly qualify'd, and commissioned, are the L O R D's *deputed Shepherds*: They have both their ability and authority, originally and fundamentally from him, the only truly Catholick, Infallible and Supream Shepherd, and Head of his Church. And in this sense, we may without vanity say with the Apostle; *Gal. I. I. That we are the Ministers, not of men, nor by man; but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.* We are appointed of him to be in his stead, to the Flock; and he hath promised to be with us, to direct us in, and to conduct us through both the Duties and the difficulties of our Work, to the end of the World.

Suffer me now (my dear Brethren) to make a few short Remarks on this Head, both for my own Admonition and yours.

1. These only are Shepherds, that are duly qualify'd and call'd; *I sent them*
not

not, saith the Lord, yet they prophecy a lye in my name, that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye and the Prophets that prophecy unto you, Jer. 27. 15. God never sends a Messenger without his Errand: Whatever the Qualification seem to be, if the Call be not of God, be sure there is a lye of one kind or other, in the Prophecy; for if God have no Errand in it, the Devil hath.

2. 'Tis no contradiction, nor Solocism in this case, for the same person to be both a *Shepherd*, and a *Sheep*; nay, nothing is more congruous. He that is a Captain had need to be a Souldier, yea, one of the best of Souldiers. Our great Shepherd is the Lamb of God, and his deputed Shepherds should not be Goats, nor Wolves. For a man to be a *Teacher* of others, and himself a *Cast away*, What is there more shameful, or more dreadful.

3. Those that are Shepherds but by deputation, be sure must give an account: The great Proprietor will not be

be defrauded: Of my hand, didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night, Gen. 31. 38. What miscarries, through the Shepherds neglect, the Shepherd must account for: If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand, Ezek. 33. 8. And of the greater value the Flock is, the more severe will the account be.

4. Shepherds must *cum Ovibus pernoctare, & excubias agere*; be the LORD's Watch-men: While the Shepherd is sleeping, the Fox and the Wolf are waking and walking. O let not a night of security so soon eclipse our dawning from the night of our late adversity! Morning naps are sweet, but in this case most dangerous. Our Enemy knows that we are apter to slumber in a calm, than in a storm; and 'tis easy, though sad to see what advantage he begins already to make of it. How can we forget what an Emphasis our dear LORD hath set on that Word *ἰπὺν ὁρᾷτε ἔστω*, Watch therefore, Mat. 24. 41. Chap.

Chap. 25. 13. Chap. 26. 41. Mark 13. 35. and 37. Luke 21. 36. & alibi. On that miraculous Deliverance at the Red Sea it is said, Then believed they his words, they sang his praise, they soon forgot his works, they waited not for his counsel, Psal. 106. 12, 13. Are not the Songs of our deliverance yet in our mouths; and a deliverance but begun, as was that of theirs? O let us not sing our selves asleep.

4. It informs us how necessary the Ministry of the Gospel is. What becomes of a Flock without a Shepherd? of a Family without a Steward? Of the Blind, without a Guide? Of the Infant, without a Nurse? Of the Sick, without a Physician? Of an Army without an Officer? Of a City without a Governor and a Watch-man? In a worse condition than any of these, is a Church, were it proper to call it a Church, without a Teacher and a Ruler. The Devil is aware of this, and very well knows where the stress of his Interest lies. If he can but effectually smite the Shepherd, the Sheep are his own;

own; Therefore like the King of Syria, he commands his Captains and Legions, *To fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King of Israel,* 1 Kings 22. 31. And hence are all his Intrigues and Attempts by force and fraud, to disgrace, discourage, divide, or corrupt, and any way to destroy the purity and the power, and were it possible the being of the Ministry of the Gospel in the World; Were it not for that promise, and that power and faithfulness that hath, and will alway make it good, *Matt. 16. 18. The gates of hell shall not prevail.* It might have been written long ago, on the universal ruins of God's Zion: **THIS WAS ONCE THE CHURCH OF GOD.** *If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say, Then they had swallowed us up quick,* Psal. 124. beg. But O how foolishly unsensible are the most of men, even of those that are call'd Christians; What a blessing and priviledge the Gospel Ministry is? yea, is it not a burthen with too many? *Thou hast been weary of me, O Israel,* Isa. 43. 22. some on one account, and some on another, are

are ready to look on the Ministry of the Gospel, as an incumbrance, an unnecessary charge, which might better be spar'd, and to say in their hearts, from the principles of *Judas's* frugality; To what purpose is this waste?

Had I not many other things yet to speak to, how readily would my Pen run beyond the bounds assigned it, in commenting on the inestimable usefulness of this glorious blessing of the Gospel; and the shameful Atheistical, Heaven-tempting ingratitude of those that are weary of it? O that a wanton, wrangling, self-will'd, Gospel-glutt'd Generation, may not, after all that the God of patience hath done for us, provoke him to testify against us; that he is as weary of us, as we are of him!

5. It informs us, what an honourable work the work of the Gospel is. 'Tis so both in its self, and with relation to its Author, its Object, and its Ends: How contemptible soever it be in the eyes of some, and how unworthy and vile soever, some of those are, that are admitted, or thrust themselves into it,

to the reproach of it. 'Tis not only a Work, but an Office, and an Office of the highest dignity; on the account of its Author, the LORD Jesus Christ, who is exalted above all Principalities and Powers, and hath a Name above every Name; The LORD of Lords, the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God; and unto whom every Knee shall bow; *No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God*: 'Tis an Honour too great for any but God to bestow; an Honour more immediately deriv'd from the Everlasting Fountain of Honour, than any other Office in the World. On the account of its *Object*; the Mystical Flock, and spiritual Kingdom of Christ; the Noble Family and Household of God. Ministers are Christ's Embassadors, not Pages nor Porters, though that were an honour, but his Embassadors and Representatives, 2 Cor. 5. 20. The *Stewards* of his House, 1 Cor. 4. 1. The *Angels* of the Churches, Rev. 1. 20. He hath put his own Honour upon them, and hath told the Word, That what is done to them, he takes as done

done to himself; and hath required his Churches to honour them, for his, and for their Work sake; διπλῆς τιμῆς ἀξιοῦσθαι. Let them be accounted worthy, or let them be dignified with double honour. The honour of respect and maintenance is due to all that are faithful; but a double or greater degree of honour and authority to those that are best qualify'd for, and most laborious in their Work. Where, by the way you may take notice, that Ministers do not live, as perhaps some are ready to think, and to upbraid them too, on the Peoples Alms. Their maintenance is of God's allowance and precept; *Non Eleemosinae, sed Honoraria*; not *Alms*, but *Rewards*, by Divine Right due to them; I say, Divine Right, *in genere*, though not *in specie*.

But of this I would not now have once opened my lips but for your sakes, who are the people, that no guilt of this kind may rest on any of you, and that you may not have any unbecoming thoughts of us on this account.

Lastly, it is honourable too on the account of its ends; The conversion,
edifi-

edification, and salvation of Immortal souls, The destroying the Works of the Devil in the World, and the pulling down his strong holds, the repairing the ruins of mankind by the Fall; and the restoring the Image of their Maker upon them, the negotiating the grand Affairs of a Peace between God and man, and of all the concerns of the Kingdom, of the Mediator upon Earth, the highest trust that ever was committed to meer Creatures; The great Work and Design which the God of Heaven hath espoused to glorify all his Attributes in, and which the Son of God was sent into this lower World for. What are Earthly Kingdoms and Dominions, and Interests to this? this is that swallows up all.

Sirs, 'Tis not without regret that we should be compell'd, as *Paul* once was, *To magnify our Office, and to become fools in glorying*, 2 Cor, 12. 11. 'Tis an honour that we acknowledge our selves infinitely unworthy of; yet it is the honour that our God hath put upon us, both for his own, and for your sakes.

6. It informs us what a Burthensom Work the Ministry is. Burthensom, not only in respect of the Labour of it; wherein if that faithfulness and diligence be used, as is necessary and required, it is the heaviest of all Employments in the World, and that which spends the strength both of Body and Spirit more than any other. 'Tis true, there are too many that live idly, and work easily enough in this Laborious Calling, whose praise is not great in the Churches, and whose comfort is not like to abound in the day of account; but those that love their Master, and their Work, and are duly sensible of their Charge, can find little time to be Idle.

Alas, Sirs, what you see and hear of our Pulpit Work, is, or should be the least part of our Labour. Besides, it is a burthensom Work in respect of the many Temptations, Oppositions, and Discouragements that attend it; both from the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. God knows, we are (the best of us) men, and but men subject to
like

like Passions as others are; We that teach others, must teach our selves: We that carry the Light before you, have as much need of the Light as you. *Noe as though we had already attained, or were already perfect, Phil. 3. 12.* The boldest Officer is in himself no more shot-free than the Common Soldier, though his dangers may be greater. Pity us then, and pray for us,, when you see a Temptation too strong for us. We are more the Butt of the Dragon's Envy, and the Mark that his Rage aims at, than you, which makes our Post by so much the more difficult,

Again, It is a burthensom Work, in respect of the unsuccessfulness of it; neither is this the least part of our Burthen. How very gladly would we spend, and be spent in the Service of our dear Flocks? We would not think the labour of our Brains, or Breasts, our Studies, or Watchings; our Travels, or Cares; our Reproaches, or Sufferings; no, nor our blood too much for them, could we but be comforted by them, with the good success of all this: But when after all, our pains and adventures,

tures, and Prayers, and Tears, we see so little of the good Fruit we long for; so little Humility, so little Charity, so little Self-denial, so little Mortification to the World; so little regular and discreet Zeal for God; this is that breaks our hearts, and makes us to walk heavily.

Lastly, It is a burthensom Work in respect of the consequence of it, both to our hearers, and to our selves. To our hearers. Their Souls and Eternal Happiness (and what have they dearer, what have they more?) is bound up in this burthen. To our selves. O the tremendous Charge, not only of our own, but of our Peoples souls, and the Account that will shortly be required of us, when the time is come, that is at hand, that we may be no longer Stewards! The serious consideration of this is astonishing; O that it may now be awakning! Well might the Apostle cry out, *πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ικανός;* *Who is sufficient for these things?*

7. It shews us the *Sin and danger of intruders* into this Office. 'Tis dangerous both to themselves, and to the Flock. To themselves, in respect of their Usurpation, which is highly Sacrilegious, in respect of their Ends; which are wont to be base, vain-glorious, and selfish; and in respect of the Account, they must at last give for the blood of souls, which will be dreadful and damning; dangerous to the Flock. The Thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill, to divide and scatter the Flock, and to serve his own Lusts on it, whatever his flattering pretences may be. The Shepherd that comes not from God, and of God's sending, tho in Sheeps Clothing, comes not to do God's, but his own and the Devils Work. I need not endeavour to prove that, which the dismal Experience of the Churches hath in so many pernicious Instances, in all Ages more than sufficiently proved; in whom Christ, and his Apostles Predictions are fulfilled, *Matt. 24. 24. Acts 20. 29, 30. 2 Pet. 2. 1. 2 Tim. 3. begin. &c. whose judgment now of a long time*

lingereth not, and whose damnation slumbereth not.

I would not speak this to the discouragement of any, whose hearts God hath stirred up to put their hands to the work of the Temple; but for the caution of those, who for base and low ends, or on wrong and mistaken Principles, are ready to run when they were never sent; tho the Tribe of *Levy* be numerous, and the Ministry, as well as many other Professions among us, seems to be overstock'd; yet have we still need to pray the Lord of the Harvest to send forth more Labourers into his Harvest; such as are both willing, and wise, and fitted for the Work of God, whereunto they are called; and then accordingly succeeded in it.

8. Lastly, It informs us of the *Sin and danger* of abusing, opposing, slighting, or any way discouraging the least of those, whom Christ hath sent and set to feed his Flock. To affront an Ambassador is all one as personally to affront him that sent him. You know how dear, and doleful an Experiment *Hanan* and his

his people made of this, in the case of David's Messengers, 2 Sam. 10. To abuse an Herald of War from a potent Enemy, is daring, and disingenuous; but to deal injuriously with the Messenger of Peace, is most provoking; none that hath power to do it, but will avenge such a villany to the uttermost. This is the case; We are sent by the Lord Jesus Christ as the Ambassadors of Peace to the World, with the Ministry of reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5. 18. Let them that now herein oppose, or malign us, see to it, how they will justify themselves at that Barr, where they and we must shortly appear together indeed, as men, and as common Christians: we neither deserve, nor expect any other than what is due to such: But as we are the Ministers of Christ, be assur'd that he very critically observes how we are treated; who they are that receive us; and who they are that receive us not: he observes not only how our Doctrine, but how our persons are entertain'd; as every thing that is done for us, even to a Cup of cold Water: So every thing that is done, or said, or

contriv'd against us, is on record with him. You know what a caution he hath given ; *Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm*, Psal. 105. 15. *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye*, Zech. 2. 8. and what a Woe to the world he hath denounced, *because of offences*, Matt. 18. 7. To wrong us in our persons, or personal concerns, will not be taken well by him : But to oppose or hinder us in that regular and faithful discharge of our Work and Office, and be resented by him with a far greater indignation.

Alas, Sirs, The trampling on us, as we are in our selves poor sinful Worms, is hardly worth our complaining : what are we better than our fellow Mortals ? But to trample on Christ in us ; as we are not only his Children, but his Stewards, and Ambassadors, and bear his Authority, is a guilt that will make the stoutest and securest heart tremble, and cry to the Rocks and Mountains another day. Nor will the reproachful Names, of *Schismatics*, or *Separatists*, wherewith they now falsely load us, justify them in that day.

C A P. IV.

*The first part of the Pastor's Charge,
viz. To Feed the Flock.*

THE next Use that I shall make of this Doctrine, shall be of *Exhortation*; which I shall direct

1. To Pastors.
2. To People.

1. *To Pastors.* Reverend! and Beloved! Gods Providence, and your Call having laid this duty upon me, the unworthiest and unfittest of all my Brethren; I dare not but be faithful, according to my measure, both to my self, and to you: as my own Monitor, and your Remembrancer.

Are we indeed some of those; to whom the Charge of *Feeding* and *Governing* the Flock of Christ, both his Lambs, and his Sheep, is committed? O let us then take heed to the Ministry,

which we have received in the LORD, that we fulfil it. You know whose Admonition this was, and to whom, it was sent, Col. 4. 17. Nor need I tell you, that it as much concerns us, as ever it did *Archippus*. The Ministry which we have received *in the LORD*. In the Name, and by the Authority, and in the House of the *L O R D*; and the concerns of his House. Or *from the LORD*, and *for the LORD*: *that we fulfil it*; discharge every part of it with fulness of diligence, fidelity, and care, to the utmost of our Understanding and Power, with all impartiality, assiduity, and perseverance to the end. But this is yet too general. The *Object* of our Charge, you see, is double. *τὰ σφύια καὶ τὰ πρόβατα*, The *Lambs*, and the *Sheep*, and so is the *Act* double; *βόσκει καὶ ποιμαίνει*, *Feed* and *Rule*, as was before expounded.

I shall first consider the *Object*, and then sure my Exhortation according to the *Act* that respectively concerns it. And,

1. *The Lambs.* The younger sort, both

both in respect of Age, and in respect of Grace. Here I would fain spend some time; but considering to whom I am speaking, I can the more contentedly contract my self. Sirs! you see, our LORD will not have these neglected; but hath given them first in his Charge to us. *Feed my Lambs.* Every wise Shepherd is wont to be very fond of his Lambs, and knows 'tis his Interest so to be, and should not we? Our LORD himself the Great Shepherd, gathers them with his Arm, and carries them in his Bosom, and should not we do so? He shew'd a peculiar delight he had in Little Ones, while he was here in the Flesh, *Mat. 19. 13, 14. Mar. 10. 13, 14. Luk. 18. 15, 16. ch. 9. 47, 48. Mat. 21. 16.* And should not we be herein, like our LORD and Master?

1. Then, let us take them as one special, I had almost said, the only hopeful part of our Charge; I mean, as to converting work, and put them into our daily Prayers and Intercessions at the Throne of Grace, if so be there may be hope in our End, and the next Gene-

Generation may be better than their Fathers have been. There are some, who are Ignorantly enough influenced by Anabaptistical Principles, that will hardly allow the *Lambs*, in this sense, to be any part of our Charge. I shall not meddle with that Bone of Contention now, and hope there are no *Deliriums* of this kind in any of our Brains. Tho' those that are under their first Convictions, and are young in the Faith, may, improperly, be called *Lambs*, yet these are they, who, in Scripture Language, are said to be *with Young*, and are plainly distinguished from *the Lambs*, Isa. 40. 11. 'Tis strange that any, but the Devil, should quarrel at this part of our Work.

2. As part of our Charge, let us take all proper and rational Methods, that lye within our reach, and their capacity, to teach and instruct them in all the necessary points of the Christian Religion, both Doctrinal and Practical. This was the Command of God by *Moses*, and the constant practice of the Conscientious in that Church. And
herein

herein the first and purest, the best settled and most thriving Churches of the Gentiles have been exemplarily diligent, and eminently successful ; nor was there ever any Age more plentifully furnished with such helps, and plain Catechistical Systems of sound words to this purpose, than is the Age we live in, which, if diligently and duely improv'd, may yet save us a Remnant, and be as a *Nail given us in his Holy Place*: a happy preface of a work of Reformation, if not in this, yet in the next Generation. But here these five words of caution may be necessary.

1. That their memories be so imploy'd, as not to be over burden'd, a due regard being had to that insuperable difference, which Nature hath made in the distribution of this Faculty. Tho' sloth or dullness, ought not to excuse, yet the burden should not be made too heavy. We must drive as *Jacob* did, *Gen. 33. 13.* as the weak and tender of the Flock can bear. Prudence must be applied here.

2. That

2. That they do not rest in the bare exercise of Memory, as Children are exceeding apt to do; but that our best endeavours to be used, to convey the Notions of Divine Truths, as they are capable, into their Understandings, which will be no little help and advantage to a weak Memory. And herein should our skill and condescension appear in plainness and familiarity of expression; yet with that seriousness, sweetness, and gravity, as doth become our Persons and Office. And in order hereto, an account should be taken of them, by such other easie questions, as are not formally learnt, but plainly included in, and may readily be answered by what is so learnt, for the trial and exercise of their Intellectuals. Of which kind also we have made ready to our hands, the useful labours of divers, who have travell'd in this Province, on that excellent *Compendium* of Theology, compos'd by the Reverend Assembly of Divines at *WESTMINSTER*: and which hath deservedly obtain'd the general acceptance of all the Orthodox in the Protestant Churches.

3. Be-

3. Because we know, that the Devil will be Catechizing the Heart, in these Young Ones, while we are Cathechizing the Ear, and the common Understanding; and will be digging his Countermines against us, in the hidden parts of the Soul, and doubling his Fortifications on the Ground of a depraved Nature; we should endeavour, with all our Holy Art, to make them sensible of their particular and real concern in these things of God, and of their Souls; so that their Consciences may be awaken'd and rous'd, and the happy Foundations of a serious, as well as early Religion be laid in them. And perhaps we may find greater success herein than we are aware of, or are apt to hope for. Conscience is as natural to them as Reason, and should be nourish'd up with it, and as we find in all other things, the younger, the more tender, and easie to be wrought upon. Tho' Fear be said, by the Atheistical Philosopher, to be that which first made, that it (in their sense) fancied and imagined, Gods in the World; yet were it not for this Con-natural Principle of Conscience, Fear would

would not make that clear and abiding Impression on the Rational Nature, as it doth. Unless we manage our work with them so, as is proper to effect the grand Design of their Conversion, we do nothing to any good purpose; but lose our properest and most acceptable time of doing their Souls that good, for which they may bless God for us in the upper World.

4. We should rest with them, in the Doctrinal, or Theoretical part; but especially insist on the Practicals of Religion; and with such plain and suitable applications, as are more obvious to their weak Understandings; that so they may come to perceive the end and use of their Instruction and Knowledge, and a Harmony may be form'd in them betimes, & *abovo*, between their Principles and their Practices Which is the most hopeful way to obviate that common Cavil of the World against Early Piety, grown into a Proverb, *A young Saint, and an old Hypocrite.*

5. Our Carriage towards them, and
Care

Care for them should in all respects be such, as may engage their Affections; which are naturally more early and readily exerted, than acts of Judgment and Understanding; that they may, as soon as possible, come to taste the sweetness of the ways of God. By such an advantage as this, you know, it is, that our Enemy, the Devil, is wont to be beforehand with us; by inflaming the sensual Appetite, and engaging the Affections, and corrupting the Will with the carnal pleasures of Sin, and the Lusts of the Flesh, before the Judgment is enlightened, or the Conscience awaken'd to discern, and to resist the Temptations, wherewith he is too hard for them. Herein then it is good policy to prevent him. When we have gotten the Hearts of our Little Ones, with what pleasure, and zeal, and innocent emulation will they go on in their work, which will make it much the easier both to themselves, and to us. I could enlarge here; but that I know to whom I am speaking, *Verbum satis sapientibus.*

2. The other part of our Charge are the

the *Sheep*; and here, as I have said, is double work. These must both be *Fed*, and *Rul'd*.

I. They must be *Fed*. 'Tis my comfort, that I am now speaking to such, as God hath made both able and apt so to do; and who, I hope, have no need of my *Directions* in it, or *Spurs* to it. Wherefore I shall only hint at some few more general heads of the things you much better understand than my self.

I. They must be fed with *wholesome Food*; The sincere Milk of the Word, τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα, sound, pure, and inadulterated Doctrine, Divine and Scripture Truths; the Bread of Life, of Heavens preparing; and not the visions of our own Hearts. Unwholesome Food breeds Diseases, and sometimes ends in Death. The Shepherd were as good starve his Flock, as poison it. O how dangerous then is blindness, or giddiness, or self-will in a Spiritual Guide! What need have we with unprejudiced minds, to study the Holy
Scrip-

Scriptures, to take heed of rashness, or singularity in the ~~M~~otions that we espouse? To Watch and Pray for that Spirit of Truth, which is promised us of God. to guide us into all Truth, that we do not gather *wild Gourds*, instead of wholesome Herbs for the *Por*? Mistakes in matters of Doctrine, wherein the Life of Souls is concerned, are of very evil consequence.

2. *They must be fed with plain Food.* The plainest food, so that it be wholesome, clean, and duely prepar'd, is the most healthy and nourishing. The true Substantial Household-bread is fittest for the Household of God. Not Airy Notions, nor doubtful Questions of Polemical, or State-Divinity, which foment Factions and vain janglings, and fill our Auditors with Wind and Ashes. How jealous was the Apostle of the Churches which he had planted in the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, lest any should spoil them thro' Philosophy? Col. 2. 8. The Churches of Christ have been but little beholden to *School Divinity*, which hath proved but as a *Garment*

ment of Linnen and Woollen, or as an Ox and an Ass in God's Plough. Alas! my Brethren, our poor Auditors, for the most part of them, can't digest these quaint Terms, and critical distinctions; they are Husks and Stones to them, and not Bread; that which may nourish, or at least please us, will choak them; what may be Orthodox in it self, and in our sublimer sense, may be Heterodox, and worse to them, because they can't reach it: and this may be one reason among others, why our LORD chose not his Apostles out of the Schools of the Learned, but from among the Fisher-Boats and poor Mechanicks; that the simplicity of the Gospel might not be lost in the Airy Clouds of vain Philosophy. Neither doth the affected curiosity of florid, enticing words of man's Wisdom, become our Sacred Function. These are things too carnal, to be blest with the demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power. 'Tis true, a genuine elegance of Speech, and readiness of utterance is a gift, that deserves not to be despised, but the more it is, or seems to be affected, or studied, the

the more it looks like a vain Pomp of Words, and loses both its value and efficacy.

3. *Their Food must be suitable and seasonable*; else it will breed a Nauseam, flatulent Crudities. and Surfeits. Herein is seen very much of the *Wisdom and Faithfulness of a Steward*, to give to the Household, their meat in due season, *Mat. 24. 45.* With what strength of Argument doth *Paul* cloath this advice of his to *Timothy*, *2 Tim. 2. 15.* Study to shew thy self approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth, aptly and seasonably applying to every one his Portion. A word fitly spoken, *ἡ δὲ ῥήμη* *super rotis suis, rotunde, tempestive, & quibus modis dici debet*, with the prudent observation of present circumstances, is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver. Nothing can be more lovely, or acceptable. This is spoken of Christ, as one eminent part of the glory and excellency of his Gospel Ministry, *Isa. 50. 4.* The LORD GOD hath given me the Tongue of the learned, that I know how to speak a word in Season to him that is weak. A healing word to the broken in Heart.

a word of Instruction to the Ignorant ; of Conviction to the Secure ; of Confutation to Seducers ; of Reduction and Confirmation to the Seduced, and Weak ; and of Terroure to the Obstinate and Impenitent, and to all these, so seasonably, suitably, and prudently, that it may not be the casting of Pearl before Swine. To this end a Pastor must study Men and Things, as well as Books and Notions. Must know, and observe, and sute himself to the state of his Flock ; and the particular tempers of those whom he hath to do. *Of some have compassion, making a difference. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the Garments spotted by the Flesh, Jud. 22. 23.* What will heal one, will but exasperate another ; and what will inflame one will but awaken another ; and what will be hearkened to at one time, will be rejected at another. Herein is need of your Wisdom, Fidelity, Patience, and indefatigable Industry.

4. *Their Food must be gently cleansing and healing ; like the Leaves of the Tree of Life, which were for the healing of the Nations ; Rev. 22. 2.* The L O R D knows,

knows, the Flock is feeble and sickly; daily liable to a thousand diseases and disasters. When-ever we walk among them, we hear their complaints; or, which is worse, we see, to our grief, the evident symptoms of the foul and dangerous diseases they lye under, and hardly sense enough to complain. Their Food must be Medicinal, as well as Nourishing. We had need to be Physicians, as well as Shepherds: Yea, all the Shepherds of Christ's sending are so. Men will not commit the Care of their Flocks to such, as can only drive them, and fleece them; but to such as understand what is healthy and best for them, and what their common Maladies are, and how to cure them: And is not Christ as tender of his Flock, as Men are of theirs? See *Ezek. 34. per totum.* There you may read what God says in this case, both of his Shepherds, and of his Sheep: *The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken—but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them; v. 4. Therefore I am against*

against the Shepherds; and I will require my Flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the Flock, v. 10. O my Brethren! the Charge of our LORD's Flock is tremendously great and weighty: Immortal Souls are of an inestimable value. And if we consider the present State of the Churches; the lamentable Breaches, and Spiritual Diseases of all kinds, that are upon them, and the great Displeasure that is signified from Heaven against them; how can it but kindle our Compassions, and quicken our Zeal, not only to bewail the hurt of the Daughter of Zion; but to apply all those proper Remedies, that lye within our respective capacities; and humbly to implore the Divine Assistance, to make all our Medicines and Methods successful? But in dangerous and complicated Cases, how wary and very watchful must that Physician be, that makes Conscience of shedding Blood! Healing without cleansing, will but make them the more rotten; and cleansing without healing, will exasperate the ill humours, and cast them out of one Disease

case into another, and perhaps worse. But I design not, and hope I need not to multiply words to you, my Brethren, who are fitter to give, than to receive Advice in this case, from such a one as I. And all this must be done ;

1. *Impartially* ; both as to Persons and Things. An allowed partiality is inconsistent with sincerity ; and as great a stumbling-block, in some cases, as we can lay before the feet of those, that are apt to stumble. I know 'tis hard to Flesh and Blood, to walk upright on so uneven a ground as we have, now a long time, been treading ; and cannot but dolefully resent the Temptations that too many are exposed to, thro' the hard circumstances of their conditions in the World. Though all that looks like partiality, be not so ; Prudence directing, and that with warrant from Scripture, *to make a difference*, and not to use the same Measures with one, as with another ; yet the selfish Spirit of Envy, Censoriousness and Ignorance, that is in the World, is always ready to take offence, where there is none
D given.

given. It concerns us therefore, that with holy watchfulness and unbyassed resolution, abandoning all base Respects, and private Interests, we so comport our selves in all cases, and towards all persons, as that our hearts may have no cause to reproach us so long as we live.

2. *Experimentally and Practically.* Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Our Sermons, in their most pressing and practical Applications, should be first, and especially Preacht to our own hearts; that from the heart, they may warmly reach the hearts of our Hearers. Like good Nurses; we should first taste and chew the Meats that we feed our Children with. 'Tis shameful and dreadful, for one that is called a Minister of Christ, to be able to speak of Spiritual things only by hear-say, or by Books. Every Scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his Treasure things new and old, *Matth. 13. 52.* ἐκ τῆ θησαυροῦ αἰαντὸν καὶ καινόν, the good Treasure, or Treasury

fury of the heart; as cap. 12. 35. A Jewel in the head, and Poison in the heart, is worse than a Toad in God's Eye. *Turpe est doctori, &c.* The Ministers of Christ must be *Ensamples* to the Flock, 1 Pet. 5. 3. And wherein? In Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity, 1 Tim. 4. 12. Their Lives must teach, as well as their Lips. They must Lead, as well as give the Word of Command; that they may be able to say, *Be ye followers of us, as we are also of Christ.*

3. *Prudently.* The imprudent management of a Trust, is one way of betraying it. Those that live in a Subtil and Serpentine Age, had need to be wise as Serpents. *Who then is a faithful and wise Servant?* ὁ πιστὸς δούλος καὶ φρόνιμος, *Matth.* 24. 45. Where these Qualifications are well met, they make the happiest conjunction in the Heavens of the Church. A Man may be learned, and yet not prudent; witty, and yet not wise; honest, and yet not discreet; good Scholars, and yet no good Pilots; zealous, but not according to knowledge.

'Tis pity that Christian Prudence should be abused ; that so noble and generous a Virtue should be enslav'd, and degenerate into Vice ; or that which is so eminently useful, and absolutely necessary, should get an ill name. But tho' it do indeed too often deserve to be so censured ; yet it is apparent enough, that those that have the least share of it, are the most forward, and the most unreasonable in their uncharitable Censures. 'Tis as natural and common for the weak (who are worst able, and have least reason) to *Judge* ; as it is for the strong, to *Despise*. It concerns us then to be very wary that we steer aright between the two Extreame in this case. Let our Prudence be founded in an holy Integrity, and exercised with due regard to the Rules of Charity ; and then we need not value the Censures of Men, nor fear any just Censures of Conscience.

4. *Diligently.* An Office of great Trust and Importance, requires great diligence. Where there are many Enemies, there must be the more watching.
No

No Office in the World is of like importance to this. Are Princes God's Vicegerents upon Earth; the Representatives and Upholders of his Authority amongst Men? It is but *in Temporalibus, & circa Sacra*. The Faithful Ministers of Christ are his Ambassadors, represent his Person, and execute his Office, in the concerns of an higher nature. Better there were neither Princes, nor People, nor Sun, nor Moon, nor Stars, nor Visible Heavens, nor Earth, than that there should be no Gospel Preacht to fallen Man; no way of Salvation opened by and thro' a Saviour; and no Means discovered of escaping the Miseries, and obtaining the Happiness of that Eternal State in the next Life. Better no Temporal Kingdom of Men, than no Spiritual Kingdom of Christ in the World. Nor is there any other Office, or Interest in the World that hath such, and so many Enemies. That Spirit of Malignity which was breathed from Hell, thro' that crooked Serpent in Paradise, hath leavened the whole Mass of Mankind, and is still working in the Children of Disobedi-

ence. The Dragon and his Angels are engaged in this War; Enemies that never slumber nor sleep; that never tire, nor desert. The Earth is full, and the Air is full; yea not only the Heathen World, but the Church it self is full of these Enemies. And more ways they have to make their Assaults, and to prosecute their Destructive Counsels, visibly and invisibly, by force and by fraud, than it is easie to enumerate, or to discover. And alas! what are we in opposition to such an Enemy, but as *Israel* before the *Syrians*, like two little Flocks of Kids, but the *Syrians* filled the Countrey? 1 King. 20. 27. How many ways might I easily enlarge on the greatness of this Importance? But I will not pretend to instruct my Instructors. Where the Enemies are mighty, and many, and vigilant, the strength, or stratagems to oppose them small, the time short, the consequence everlasting, and the loss irreparable, there is need of Diligence.

5. *Couragiously.* The Ministry is a Warfare; a Service of hardships and hazards.

hazards. Courage becomes a Souldier ; much more an Officer. The Coward is not far from a Traitor. They are commonly principl'd alike, and there is but the odds of a Temptation between the one and the other. Courage is the Life of a Souldier, and one of the surest Pledges of Victory. When God sent forth his Servant *Joshua*, and gave him a Commission to lead his People over *Jordan*, to their promised Possession ; though he had assured him of his special Presence with him ; yet knowing what is in the heart of the best of Men, he saw it needful to inculcate this Charge on him, no less than three times in one short Speech ; *Josh. 1. 6. Be strong and of a good Courage. Only be thou strong and very courageous. Vers. 7. Have not I commanded thee ? Be strong, and of a good Courage ; be not afraid, Vers. 9.*

This may serve to caution us, both of giving way to our own fears ; and of presuming on our own strength. Bold *Peter* was as easily overcome, as one of a more dastardly spirit could have been. My Dear Brethren ! I know I need not read you a Lecture

of Christians **Courage**. You have seen the high and terrible hand, wherewith our God hath led us these thirty years, thro' many Temptations and Tryals of Affliction, that have befallen us in this Wilderness: We will not spit on God's Rod now, nor aggravate our past Sufferings to the reproach of the guiltiest of Instruments; but will here set up to the L O R D, our *Eben-ezer*, who hath hitherto helped us. And from the times that have passed over us, let us receive instruction for whatsoever doth yet abide us. 'Tis necessary that our Faith and Patience have *ἔργον τέλειον*, their perfect work, their perfecting and crowning work: O let not the present *Calm* effeminate our **Courage**, nor transport it to any wrathful Indecencies; but let us press on, with our Loyns always girt in the way of our duty, if the will of God be so, prepared with an unshaken resolution for hotter Services, and forer Tryals, than yet we have been called unto.

6. *Compassionately*. O Sirs! what Object is there in the World, that so cries for

for our pity and help, as the wretched Soul that is perishing by his own hands? That is ready to starve, and die eternally for want of Bread? That is blind, and running on ignorantly, and presumptuously on everlasting destruction, and sporting with his own damnation? That is caught in the snares of the Devil, and cannot escape? Or, that is held on the torturing Rack of a self-condemning Conscience? That is plung'd in the amazing Horrors of Despair, and would give all the World for one glimpse of hope, whose groans and complaints are able to break an heart of Flint? And is it not with such as these that we have to do? Are not the most of Men in one or other of these Extreams? either senseless, or raving? too confident, or too diffident? Are not such as these to be pitied? How can our bowels but be in pain for them? Have we our selves had the experience of such a case, and can we make light of it? Yea, the Relation wherein we stand towards them, calls for our compassion, as we are their Fathers, their Nurses, their Shepherds,

their Physicians. And what a pattern of Compassion have we in our dearest LORD and Master! wherein it is our Duty and Glory to imitate him, as *Paul* did, *Phil. 1. 8.* *For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.* The less of Compassion, the more like the Devil.

7. *Patiently.* We are hence called of God, as Souldiers, to militate in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ; and we must expect to endure hardness, as our LORD, for our sakes, and for our Example hath done before us. No sort of Men in the World have more need of Patience, than we; and that not only with relation to them without; but to them within. From those without; what scorn and contempt, what slanders and reproaches, what envy and opposition, what plottings and persecutions, and railing and rage must we look for? How hard and how long must we labour to recover one dead Soul to life? What difficulties must we break thro' to rescue one poor Sheep out of the Dens of the Thieves, or of
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the Beasts of Prey? O what need have we of Patience, to deal with blind, proud, graceless, hardened Sinners! Would we give the World the *Journals* of our Warfare; we might produce a Piece of the same kind with that of the Apostle; 2 *Cor.* 11. 23, &c. But besides those things that are without, that which cometh unto us daily, the Care of the Churches committed of God to us: How many weak ones? how many froward, passionate, selfish, luke-warm and disorderly ones have we to exercise our Patience with? When God's time was come, according to his Promise, to lead that froward, murmuring, unstable People out of *Egypt*, he chose one of the meekest and patientest Men then upon Earth to do it, *Numb.* 12. 3. Is not this one of the most glorious and useful Pieces of our Spiritual Panoply, both as Christians, and as Ministers? Which is given us in particular Charge? 1 *Tim.* 6. 11. *Titus* 2. 2. And which we should keep bright by daily exercise? O what sad work shall we make, if Impatience once get the Reins of us? And hath not long Experience to

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our sorrow taught us, that whatever the provocations be, fretting, and storming, and passionate youthful heats, or capricious repartees, are a poor kind of revenge, and as unsuccessful, as it is an irrational way to help it. A man's prevailing Passion is his weakness; which, if one have charity for himself, he will be careful to suppress and conceal: much less should he, that is a Teacher of others, defile the Pulpit with the proclamation of it.

8. Lastly, *Perseveringly*. He that hath put his hand to God's Plow, must not look back. Tho the work be hard and painful, the difficulties great, the discouragements many; yet we must hold up, and hold on, and hold out, knowing that we shall reap in due season, if we faint not. We, unto whom this sacred Office is, according to Scripture Order committed, have our Ears bored to the Posts of God's Sanctuary, for service, *durante vita*; nor can any Creature or Authority upon Earth legally dissolve this Bond, or supersede this *Commission*, unless it be in case of a *Criminal* forfeiture,

as was that of *Abiathar*, 1 Kings 2. 26, 27. or of a Natural or Moral Incapacity of discharging the Duties, and answering the Ends of the Office. The Reason is plain; because the Office and Commission is primarily, and fundamentally from God, and not from man. Neither may any one that is lawfully called to, and invested with it, voluntarily desert, or alienate himself from it, without the dreadful guilt of Sacrilege, Apostacy, and Perjury: *A dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me*, says St. Paul, *and a necessity is (thereby) laid upon me*; therefore, *Wo unto me, if I preach not the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 9. 16, 17. As for any particular Exceptions in some rare and extraordinary cases: * Where-
 in it may be lawful for a man to lay aside his Ministerial Function. I shall not here mention, nor shall I now examine how far, and in what cases it is both lawful, prudential, and expedient for the Churches peace and safety, to give way to the torrent of a Tide, and for a season to suspend the ordinary acts, and exercise of the Ministry; which is
 a case

* See Mr. G.
 T. Pastor's
 Case and Dig.
 p. 14.

a case that hath been, and for ought we know, or for ought we have at God's hands deserved, may again be.

But I shall wave this Question, unless I were particularly call'd to it, and shall conclude this *Chapter*, with the *Sixth Petition* of our LORD's Prayer: *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.*

C H A P. V.

The Second Part of the Pastor's Charge, viz. To govern and rule The Flock.

2. **T**HE other, and indeed the more difficult and obnoxious part of our Ministerial Work, is to rule, to exercise the Authority that is given us of the Lord, as Shepherds over his Flock.

This was what I had neither time, nor mind to discourse of in the Pulpit; and should now dismiss it with the same brevity, and general hints (being conscious of my own weakness, and apprehensive of the use that some are like to make of what I must say, if I say any thing) did not the sense of my Duty oblige me to accept of the Burthen that is laid upon me, and to discharge it with that sincerity, and impartiality (according to the measure that is given me of God,

God, for his Churches Service) as doth become one that desires to be found faithful.

I confess my heart cannot but shrink at the thoughts of entring into this rough and thorny Province, this Seat of War, where I see so many Parties engag'd, and Swords drawn at one another.

God knows, and my Brethren are my Witnesses, that this is not a Work of my own seeking ; nor am I come as an Advocate of any of the contending parties, but with an earnest desire, and design of Peace and Truth : In the prosecution whereof I shall purposely (as far as possible) decline any use of the sentiments, or suffrages of such as have been at sharps on this Argument ; and confine my self to those Oracles of the divinely inspired and revealed Truth in the Holy Scriptures ; the Rule which at last we must be determined by, if ever we be well determined. The word that God (this way) putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak, as he shall please to give me understanding, and utterance : and
let

let those that are otherwise minded, consider before they censure.

Should I pretend to assume the whole Question of Church-government, it would swell into a volume; whereas I intend only this one short *Chapter*, for what I shall now say on this Subject; and therein as little as I can; which yet to some perhaps may seem too much; and to others too little.

I shall not spend any time in writing an Encomium of Government, either in general, or particular, which hath been done by many others, of the usefulness and necessity, whereof the whole rational world is experimentally sensible.

But of Government there are divers kinds; according to the diversity both of the matter and form of it.

That which we are now to consider, is the Ecclesiastical, or the Government of the Church, and House of God in the World. The *Apostle* tells us, *There is no Power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordained of God. Who-soever therefore resisteth, resisteth the Ordinance of God, Rom. 13. 1, 2.* The Powers

ers ἐξουσία, *Potestates*. Governments that are amongst men, are God's Ordinance, tho all the evil ways of climbing into it, and male-administration of it, or imprudent circumstances in the constitution of it, be not of God, but of men. But if all the Powers and Governments of the world be of God, then hath he not left his Church, which is his peculiar Kingdom, without Government. But the Question is not, Whether Ecclesiastical Government in the general be *jure divini*; but whether there be any particular Form of this Government that is so, and what that Form is.

This is the Τὸ ζήτημα, the *Nodus vindice dignus*.

There are some that deny there is any Form of Church-Government, appointed of Christ under the New-Testament, but that it is left to be modified by the Rules of Human Prudence, and Discretion: But then such would do well to let us know when, and where, and to whom the Lord Jesus Christ hath committed this Power of *Legislation*, and establishing the Forms of Government to his Churches. 'Tis true, there are
some

some Circumstantials of Government, that are, and must be left to the Discretion of Governors, to be adapted, *pro re nata*, to the present state of the Governed. But if the Essentials of Government be left to the wisdom and will of men, then are the Churches in a very ill case. Nor do I know how we shall be able to prove, *That as Moses was faithful in all the house of God, as a servant, so Christ much more, as a son over his own house, Heb. 3. begin.* But that he was so, *de facto*, in the business of Government and Discipline, as well as in Doctrine and Worship, and satisfaction to God, as our Redeemer, is well enough to be prov'd from the Scriptures. Whence I conclude, that the Government of the Church is appointed of Christ in the Holy Scriptures, *in specie*, as well as *in genere*.

Of those that are thus far agreed, there are yet divers Opinions, and Parties; some are for this Form of Government; others for that; the Reasons of which disagreement are commonly some such things as these.

1st. *An invincible ignorance of the true sense of the Scriptures in this Point; and the very mind of Christ, and his Apostles in them.*

Charity obliges me to believe, that there are very many of most of the contending Parties, that would readily, and cheerfully acquiesce in the Sentiments of their Opposers, could they but overcome the Reasons, which they think they have truly and rightly drawn from the Scriptures, to be otherwise minded: And yet it is most certain, that there is gross and affected ignorance enough among the Contenders of all sides: And these are the persons that are wont to be most fierce and confident. The mind of Christ is in it self but one, and can be no more; therefore our disagreement about it necessarily concludes our Ignorance, or something worse on the one side, or the other.

2. *The natural fondness that men have for their own Ways and Lusts.*

Though there is no Government in the World of so pure a nature, or firm
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a texture, or constitution, but that it may be abus'd to the service of base ends, and private interest; yet there are some Modes and Forms of Government, that are in themselves more directly accommodated, by the Policy of the Compilers, and Founders of them to such purposes: And such are they especially, that are of mens devising, and obtruding on the Spiritual Kingdom of Christ. For Usurpers (be sure) will always frame their Laws, and Methods, in favour of their own Designs: And were there nothing else but private Interest and Design among the Parties concern'd, that difference that is amongst men, on this account, must needs be an occasion of contention. But much more must such as are acted by Principles of true Conscience and Integrity, think themselves bound to protest against all such politick and carnal Forms of Government.

3. *The Gross Abuse, and Degeneracy of a good and well ordered Government.*

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The purest and most durable Metal, if not well kept, will in length of time grow foul and rusty, and look very unlike it self, and then it will be question'd and quarrell'd at, and deny'd to be what in truth it is: And the same fate are the best Governments in the World subject to. As was the Kingly Government among the *Affyrians* in the days of *Sardanapalus*; and among the *Romans*, in the days of *Tarquinius Superbus*: And so it hath been of several other Forms of Government amongst men. The best and most sacred Constitutions that ever were in the Earth, by their abuse have fallen under the *Odium* and contempt of the more inconsiderate part, that are apt to lust after new things, and know not how to restore the old to their Original rectitude; as besel the *Theocracy* of God's own appointment, 1 *Sam.* 8. 5 and 7. But were the Argument good from the abuse of a thing against the use of it, 'twere easy to argue our selves into the grossest Absurdities in Nature.

Now if we would rightly understand what that Form of Government is, that
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Christ hath chosen for his Churches under the Gospel, we must consider what the Subject of the Government is, or the matter which is to be inform'd by it. 'Tis not enough to say the Church, which is *vox ambigua*; but we must distinguish: Nor is it necessary for me to take notice here of all the Distinctions the Word is capable of, or that have been, by some others, imposed on it. As,

1. The Church *Oecumenical*; to which the Pope so arrogantly and falsely lays a claim of Supremacy. Or,

2dly. The Church *National*; of which that Eminent Servant of Christ, Mr. *Baxter* hath given so Rational, and Scriptural an account; and which (that I know) is not by any one, as yet, answered. Or,

3dly. The Church *Provincial*; which is the Constitution and Union of the particular Churches, within the limits of the Province, into one distinct Political Body, or Sacred Polity, under the

the general inspection and Authority of one Ecclesiastical Head, either single, or collective: Or,

4ly. The *Presbyterial, Classica, Collegiate, Diocesan, &c.* which I take as Synonymous, and includes all the particular *Congregations* within the bounds of such a *Division*. Or,

5ly. The *Congregational*, made up of one *Pastor*, with his people, and necessary Officers.

These are the Distinctions given according to the *Common Division* that hath, for *Order* sake, been made of the Church.

But the only Distinction which I shall now a little animadvert upon, is this;

The Rulers of the Church, and the Ruled; and shall speak to the Last first.

The Ruled. And herein shall answer these three Questions.

I. Who

1. Who they are
 2. By whom
 3. By What Laws
- } they must be ruled.

Q. 1. Who they are that must be ruled?

S. The Answer, in general, is what Paul gives; *loco cit.* Rom. 13. 1. *πᾶσα ψυχή every Soul.* He that is not subject to the good Government of that Political Body, civil, or sacred, whereunto he stands related as a Member, and by which he ought to be comprehended, is *ἀνομος καὶ ἀνυπακούστος* the Lawless and Disobedient, for whom the Bridle and the Rod of the Law is made; and so both Rulers and Ruled are equally subject to the Laws, though not the same Laws of Government; but according to the different capacities, orders, and Relation wherein they are placed in the Oeconomy of the Church. Though the Rulers and the Ruled cannot be the same, *sub eodem respectu*; yet in divers respects they may, and ought; Those that are Rulers of some, must be ruled by others: So then the Ruled part, of which I am first to speak, is twofold; the Clergy and the Laity; or the Ministers and the

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people

People; according to the duplicity of the Government; to which, as Church-Members they stand related; which is either general and common, or special and proper.

The Rulers and Officers of the Church, as those of Armies, and Commonwealths or Kingdoms, are, or ought to be *ὑπὸ ἐξουσίᾳ*, *men under Authority*, and the Laws of a Polity, that is proper to them as such, as well as the people, whom they govern by the Laws that are fitted for them: I say, under Authority, and that not only, and immediately unto Christ, but also unto men; even such as Christ, the Supream Legislator, and Lord, hath Commissioned to rule for, and under him, in his Church. This seems to me to have been one great mistake, and the ground of a thousand more; That the Ministers of the Gospel have, and hold their Authority in the Church, only from Christ *in capite*; so as to conclude an equality, and co-ordination of Pastors. 'Tis true, the general Patent and Grant of the Office is originally, and immediately from Christ; but the particular distri-

distribution of Commission is not so, but from such hands as are entrusted and authorized by him to bestow it on others; and unto whom, they that receive it, ought to be accountable for their well, or male-administration of it. All those that are duly qualify'd, and call'd to the Ministry, are equally Ministers of Christ, *i. e.* one is not more a Minister than another; nor meerly, as such, have they greater power one than another; as all men in the World are equally men, God's Creatures, and partakers of Human Nature: But from hence to deny a subordination of one to another, in point of Government, is to pluck up all Government in the World by the roots, and turn the whole Creation into Anarchy, and worse than its first *Tobu veboku*; which is one of the maddest Principles that ever was suggested to the Rational Nature, by that grand Author of confusion. Let it be considered, that the Officers of the Church of Christ, or the Clergy, as for distinction they are commonly call'd, are a particular distinct Company and Society of men, as the People or Layity are another; and so

they ever were, and were to be accounted by God's own appointment, both under the Old and New-Testament: And as it is in all regulated Armies, and other secular Governments in the world, the Officers are a separate Political Body and Community of themselves, distinct from the rest; and if so, then they ought to have their proper Polity and Government as such: a Government peculiar and distinct from that of the common people, and which is call'd Hierarchy, only *κατ' ἐξουσίαν*. And that it ever hath been, and always must be so, is not hard to prove.

I. *That it hath been ever so*, since Christ hath had a Church upon the Earth; I say a Church, organically constituted, and politically govern'd. Such was the Jews under that of the hands of *Moses* and *Aaron*; That the Ministers under the Old Testament, the Priests and Levites, were a distinct Body, yea, and to avoid confusion, a distinct Tribe, purposely so chosen of God; and that they had their distinct Polity and Government, of God's own appointing, and that with a great deal
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of caution and particularity, even to very minute circumstances, in all the Orders, Degrees, and Courses of their Consecration, and Ministration. I would think it needless for me to spend time to demonstrate; Those that have any acquaintance with the Sacred History of that Church, cannot be ignorant of this. And this was both the beauty, and the strength and security of that Church: the Hedge that God made about his Vineyard. And as they were a distinct Body, as *Clergy*, separate from all the other Tribes; so they had their proper Government and Oeconomy; the *Priests* of the House of *Aaron*, the Rulers; and the rest of the *Levites* the Ruled. And that it was so under the Gospel too from the beginning, is very evident. Our blessed LORD, when he began, with his Ministry, to lay the Foundations of the new *Jerusalem*, the Gospel Church, what could be more plainly distinguishing, than his chusing the select number of *Twelve*, as one Superiour Order of Ministers; and of *Seventy*, whom he sent forth to Preach the Gospel, as an Order inferiour to

the *Twelve*? Tho' their general Office and Commission, as Preachers, were both the same, which made them of one Body and Society as such, but of a different Order and Degree; and these as plainly and politically distinguished from the Body of the common Disciples, as any one political Society, or Company of Men in the World is from another. And thus they have been ever since, with all the reason in the World, taken as a particular Company and Body of Men, on the account of their Holy Calling, separate and distinct from the Common People; and as such, have a Government, of Christs own Institution, proper and peculiar to them. I do not think that the exact number of *Twelve*, or of *Seventy*, doth at all concern us Gentiles; but that which is in it common both to Jews and Gentiles concerns us as well as them. What the *Priests* were to the *Levites*, that the *Twelve* were to the *Seventy*. Yea and among the *Twelve* there seems to be a difference both of Order and Degree. Tho' *Peter* was not the *Princeps Apostolorum*, he was the *Primus Discipulorum*, the Senior of

of that School, or *Collegium Presbyterorum*, and next in Dignity, under Christ his LORD and Master; for we find that *Peter* was the Person, unto whom Christ did immediately direct all his Speeches that concerned them in common: that when the *Twelve*, or any part of them are mention'd, if *Peter* were one, he was always named first. Yea, and *Matthew*, in his Catalogue, does not only name him first, but gives him the Title of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma$, which, for ought I know, is as much as $\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\varsigma$, or *Præses*. Neither, tho' this be granted, will it at all strengthen, or favour the arrogant claim of the Bishop of *Rome*, to be *Peter's* Successor. For *Peter* himself was call'd the $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma$, not with relation to the Church Universal, of which Christ alone is the Head; but with relation to that particular Society, or *Collegium*, of which he was then a Member. For when the frame and Oeconomy of that particular Society was dissolved, as it was by the Death of Christ, *Peter* was no more a $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma$, a *Primate* or *President*, than any of the other *Eleven* were.

2. *That it must be always so.* And great reason there is for this.

1. Because Christ hath instituted it by his own practice, and example, as appears by what hath been now said; and what Christ hath once instituted, may not by man be abrogated, or altered.

2. Because there is perpetual need of it: I need not descant upon this; Doleful Experience tells us, to our shame, that there is no Society, or—Body of men in the World, that have more need of the Reins of Government, than the Ministry. Hath every Company of Physicians, Chirurgeons, Merchants, Apothecaries, Taylors, Drapers, Shoemakers, Victuallers, Vintners, Bakers, Brick-layers, &c. need of a Government peculiar to their respective Companies and Professions, in the best governed Towns and Corporations? I would I could say, that Ministers have not much more; whose Errours and Miscarriages are of sadder consequence than any of theirs aforementioned. If every Minister, as such, be immediately under Christ, as to Government, (which

(which cannot be, unless they had their Commission immediately from him, as the Apostles, had) then is he accountable to none else, but is absolute and independent in his Office. What grosser principle of Tyranny can there be than this? What wider Gate can there be opened to the most Licentious Arbitrariness? And in what a case then are the poor Churches? This is to pull down one Tyrant, and to set up many thousands, and to make every Novice a Lord over Gods Heritage.

Quest. 2. By whom must they be ruled?

Sol. Not by themselves sure, that's plain *Anarchy*, and utterly inconsistent with any *Form* of Political Government; (which the *Quakers* themselves would soon be weary of (as in *Pensilvania*, they say, they begin to be) were they not, in despite of their irrational Principles, preserv'd from the mischievous consequences of them, by the common benefit of the Government they here live under) but they must be rul'd by the Authority, which God hath set over them, and every one, both Pastors and

People, by their own immediate Officers. *Obeys them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves, Heb. 13. 17.* And who are they whom Christ hath set to Rule and to Govern in his House; but those whom he calls his *Stewards* his *Ministers*, into whose hands he hath committed the *Keys* of Government? Neither hath he shared the Ruling Power, or any part of it between them and the People; nor could it have been consistent with the honour of his Wisdom, or the Interest and Peace of his Churches to have done it. *I will give unto Thee (not one, but both) the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 16. 19.* That these are the *Keys* of Doctrine and Discipline, appears by the explication of it in the next words. *Whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven*, which is the exercise of the Authority given him. Neither is this Power of Government given to *Peter* exclusively, nor as a private Disciple, but as a publick Minister, and publick Officer in the Church of Christ; and with him to all the rest of his Brethren in the same Office, for them and for their Successors, *Mat. 18. 18.* Who is it that Christ means by the *faithful and wise Steward*? *Lu.*

11.42. Is it not the same, that the Apostle means, 1 Cor. 4. 1. *The Ministers of Christ*; and Tit. 1. 7. *A Bishop must be blameless, as the Steward of God. And this is the Steward, whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his Household, to give them their portion of meat in due season.* So that the Government of his Church is established by Christ, in the hands of his Ministers, on whom he breathed the Holy-Ghost, to qualifie them for, and carry them thro' all the work, both ordinary and extraordinary, whereto he sent them, Job. 20. 22. By this it appears in the general, in whose hands, immediately under Christ, the governing power doth lye; not in the People, but in the Ministers of the Gospel, who alone are his *Stewards*, and unto whom, at his departure, he delivered the *Keys* of his House, and of all the Provisions and Treasures in it. And who are sometimes, in the New Testament, call'd his *Ambassadors*, or *Messengers*; sometimes *Bishops*, or *Overseers*; sometimes *Presbyters*, or *Elders*; sometimes *Profectores*, or *Rulers*, which are but several Names and Titles given to one and the same

same sort of men. I know no point in Scripture more plainly asserted, than this, *viz.* That Christ hath join'd the Teaching and Ruling Authority together, and committed it, in conjunction, to the same hands. But what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

Quest. 3. By what Laws must they be ruled?

Sol. Not by Laws of mens devising; which they are wont to accommodate to the service of their own Inclinations and Ends; but by the written Laws of his own prescription. The Oeconomy is Spiritual and Divine, and so must the Laws be, by which it is administred. *Other Foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 3. 11.* The Foundation of Government and Discipline, as well as of Doctrine and Worship, is laid by Jesus Christ; and whoever lays any other Foundation in either of these, entrenches on Christ's Prerogative, and shall do it to his own peril. Tho' in the *necessary Circumstancials* of all these, humane Prudence and Authority hath a determining power, for the Order, Peace, and Edification of

of the Church; but not to its destruction, or disturbance. I say, the *necessary Circumstantials*; but unnecessarily to multiply Circumstantials, under the Notion of Indifferents, and on pretence of Decency or Authority, is a very unacceptable, and offensive piece of Superstition; and to impose them, as the indispensable terms of Communion, on such as are not satisfied about them, is not the least Instance of Church-Tyranny. Church Officers are but Christ's Deputies, and not Lords of Gods Heritage; and therefore must rule by Christ's Laws; *For he is our Judge, our Law-giver, and our King, Isa. 33. 22.* Our Power is but to execute; 'tis he that must make, and give the Laws. And what these Laws are, and where to be found, I need not say. the Holy Scriptures are his *Statute-Book*; If they speak not according to this Rule, it is because there is no light in them.

2. *The Rulers.* If there be some to be ruled, there must be others to Rule. *Relata se simul ponunt & tollunt; & qui novit unum Relatorum, novit & alterum.* Yet here it will be enquired, who are those that are to Rule? I

I shall not take notice of the Regal Power, or how far, it being Christian, it extends both over Pastors and People, not only as Civil Subjects, but as Christian Churches; and not only in the things of men, but in the things of God; but shall refer my Reader for this to Mr. *Baxter*, of National Churches, and to others that have written of it, it being forreign to my present Text. But as Pastors and People are two distinct Political Bodies, so there must be two distinct *Forms* of Government proper to each of them. I shall speak,

1. *Of the People.* These are to be rul'd, and not to rule in the House of God. I know this is an hard saying, and that there are many that can badly bear it; nor would I thus displease them, could I help it, and yet be faithful. Those that are for a *Democracy*, seem to be guided by the same Spirit, as they were, *Numb. 16. 3. Who gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation is holy, everyone of them. Wherefore then lift ye up your selves above the Congregation*

gregation of the LORD? That the Tribe of *Reuben* should be guilty of such a thing was not so strange; but great pity it was, that any of the Tribe of *Levi* should conspire with them. There is no Minister of Jesus Christ, that can consent to such an Usurpation, and be innocent, and true to the Trust, committed to him. Let those that are for the Peoples ruling in the Church of Christ, shew us when and where the *Keys* of Government, or any one of them, was put into any of their hands. Where did our LORD make them partners with us in the Government of his Church? Or what part of the Governing Office and Work was it that he assigned to them? Herein I am sorry that I must dissent, not only from Men of an inferiour Note, and more Heterodox Principles, but from the Learned *Calvin* too, and almost all that follow him. For I could never yet find in Scripture any such Officer as a non-preaching ruling Elder, appointed of Christ, or of his Apostles in the Church. The one and only Officer that Christ himself made, was the *Minister* of his Word,

Word, the Evangelical Pastor, whose work was to feed and to rule the Flock. To which the Apostles afterward added the Office of the *Deacons*, as Servants to them, and Helps in the meaner part of their work, as may be seen, *Act. 6. begin.* and as *Moses* did, for the ease of his Government, by the advice of *Jethro*, *Exod. 18. 18, &c.* Which, tho' it be Apostolical, yet cannot be said to be *Primarily*, but only *Secundarily Jure Divino*. The Scriptures that are alledged in favour of this Ruling Lay Elder, do not (as I think) prove any such conclusions; which I shall now examine, and leave all to the consideration of such, as can without prejudice, weigh what I am now bold to offer. One Text we have, *Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8.* To which I have this exception. If the ὁ προϊστάμενος, *He that ruleth* be here mention'd as a distinct Officer in the Church, then why not all the rest? of which we have these seven in this one Scripture, *viz.* he that prophesieth: he that ministrereth: he that teacheth: he that exhorteth: he that giveth: he that ruleth: and he that sheweth mercy. But if we go to work
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in this way, how will Offices be multiplied in the Church, beyond all that was ever intended or imagined? And then, 1 Cor. 12. 28, 29, 30. where we have no less than nine mention'd, among which we find *κυβερνήτης*, which they would have to signify the *Ruling Lay-Elder*; and so we would believe too, could they prove, that all the rest here mentioned were so many Offices in the Church. They insist very confidently on these words of sanction, *Ἐθέλω ὁ Θεός*, *God hath set and appointed*; but why this word, which hath undeniably an equal relation to all, should make, or prove one to be an Office, and not another, I confess is a depth that I am not able to fathom. Here (as I think) the great mistake lies; that Gifts and Offices are confounded. The Apostle 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. very plainly distinguishes between Gifts, Administrations, and Operations, *χαρίσματα, διακονίας ἐνεργημάτων*. Where by Gifts are meant the Abilities bestowed upon the Offices, or Administrations in order to the operations, or effects of them, to the edifying of the Church. Now in the fore-mention'd Scriptures

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we find a diversity of Gifts and Operations; but Gifts and Offices are not the same.

But there is one Scripture more, which hath been already quoted, on the Doctrinal part of this Discourse, which seems to speak more fully to their purpose, and to make a distinction between Preaching and Ruling Elders, viz. 1 Tim. 5. 17. *Let the Elders that Rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine.* Much use hath been made of this Text to little purpose; I shall not now mention any of all that I have seen, and read of it; but give you, as God hath enabled me, the true sense of this Scripture, and let the unprejudiced Reader judge.

And that we may understand the mind of Christ in it, we will consider,

I. By whom, and to whom this Direction was given.

It was by the Apostle *Paul*, the great planter of the Churches of the Gentiles; and who, as an Apostle, had Power and Authority to order and determine all the

the affairs that concern'd the Discipline and Government of the Churches of his own planting. Both this, and the other Epistle was written by him to *Timothy*, whom he left as his Substitute, or Surrogate with Apostolical Power under him in the Church of *Ephesus*, to ordain *Presbyters* as there should be occasion, and to dispose of the Dignities and Revenues of the Church to such as were most worthy of them, and would best improve them to the Glory of Christ, and the Churches benefit. And for the same end it was that he left *Titus* in *Crete*, as his Substitute, or Overseer in that Island, as appears *Tit. 1. 5.* So that this advice was not sent to the people, nor to the Inferior *Presbyters*, who were to be ordered by it, but to one in a higher Sphere of Authority, and by whom they were to be ordered; whether for distinction sake he be called Evangelist, or Bishop, or President, or Moderator; the difference is but verbal.

2. What doth the Apostle mean by the *double honour* here?

There are two things that seem to bid fair for the Sense, which will both come to one in the issue.

1. *The*

1. *The Honour of Maintenance*: and so we find the word sometimes used in Scripture; as ver 3. of this Chap. *Matt.* 15. 6. *Acts* 28 10. and the following words of the *Apostle* in this Scripture, seem to look this way: and then the Sense must be this: Let those Officers of the Church that best discharge the Duties of their Office in ruling, but especially in Preaching (which is the more noble and necessary part of their Work) have the greatest encouragement on this kind; *i. e.* Let not the Revenues of the Church (which were then but small and uncertain) be bestowed promiscuously, much less partially, *χαρις πνεύματος, μη δυν ποιῶν κατὰ πρόσλησιν*; but so as may best subserve the Churches good Government, and the grand Design of preaching the Gospel.

2. *The Honour of Authority and Obedience.*

And this is the prime sense of the Word, as it is used in the Fifth Commandment; *Honour thy Father, and thy Mother*, *Exod.* 20. 12. is the same with, *Obey your Parents*, *Eph.* 6. 1. *And obey them that have the rule over you*, *Heb.* 13. 17. and so is the word used, *Heb.* 5. 4.

No man taketh this Honour unto himself: i. e. this Office, this Dignity, this power and authority

And this indeed is much more worthily and properly call'd Honour, than a rich worldly Revenue, or a fat Benefice or Bishoprick (things unborn in those days) which men too often abuse, both to God's dishonour, and their own.

Now if this be the Double Honour here intended, as to me seems most probable; at least, that it is included, as the most eminent part of it; then the sense will be this: Let those Presbyters or Ministers that appear, on experience and tryal, to have a Spirit of Government; but especially with it, an eminency of ability and diligence in preaching the Word, be made Rulers, and Superintendents over the inferior part of the Clergy; let such be taken into the *Colligium, Presbyterorum regens*; the Regency of the Church. So that it is not the distinction of Office, but the qualification of the Officer, that the Apostle gives this direction for.

3. We must consider the persons, on whom this double honour is to be
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conferr'd; or who are thus to be dignified, as the word *ἐξουσιάζουσιν*, properly signifies; and these are Elders; describ'd,

1. *In genere*; by their Office.
2. *In specie*; by their Qualifications.

1. *By their general Office*, *πρεσβύτερον*, which is a word always us'd to denote the Ministers of the Word in the Gospel-Church; as *Act. 11. 30. ch. 14. 23. ch. 15. 2, 6, 22, 23. ch. 16. 4. ch. 20. 17. ch. 21. 18. Tit. 1. 5. Jam. 5. 14. 1 Pet. 5. 1. 2 Ep. John 1. and Epist. 3. 1.*

2. *By their special Qualification*; which is double.

1. They much be such as *Rule well*; *καλῶς πορεύσασθαι*, which is another Title, peculiarly given in the New Testament, to the Ministers of the Word, whose Office it is to Rule as well as to Preach.

2. They must be *καταρτιστὲς ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλία*, such as *labour in the Word and Doctrine*. So that the word *μέλιστα*, doth not distinguish, as I have said, between two Offices; but between the twofold Qualifications of one and the same Office. There were in the Church of

of *Ephesus* (which was a Collegiate, or Presbyterial Church) many Presbyters, the Talent of whose Gifts lay diversly, as we find it doth in all other Churches; some were fitter for Government, others for Preaching; some excelled in one Gift, others in another. Now the Apostle advises *Timothy* how to make his choice of Persons for Government in the Presbytery; whom to prefer to, and entrust with a double honour, or higher degree of Dignity and Power in this kind and sphere of Government; and tells him, they must be such, as have behav'd themselves well in the Pastoral Government of their particular Flocks and Congregations; and especially such of them as are most eminent and laborious in Preaching the Word; whereby they purchase to themselves a good Degree; as it is said of the *Deacons*, 1 *Tim* 3. 13. Καθὼν καλόν, a place of higher Honour and Trust, from a Deacon to a Presbyter from a Presbyter to a President. Preferments ought to be dispensed according to every ones Qualifications and Merits. Whence it appears, that there are Degrees in the Ministry

Ministerial Office : And this is that the Apostle here gives this Direction about ; not at all countenancing a Non-Preaching Ruling Lay-Elder ; but discountenancing a Lordly, Lazy, Non-Preaching Bishop, or Superintendent. That the Preaching Elder or Minister of the Gospel is to Rule, as well as to Preach the Word, is so plainly asserted in Scripture, that, I think, cannot by any be denied. But if this Ruling Power were divided by Christ, or his Apostles, between *Them* and the *People*, or any *part* of the *People* ; can any one give us a reason, why neither Christ nor his Apostles should ever speak a word, to direct us, how the Division of this Ruling Power must be made ? What must be their part, and what ours ? How they must be qualified, as well as we ? and the Deacons, for which they were careful to give the necessary Rules ? Yea and how they must be maintain'd too ? For to lay the burden of an Office on a Man, and to make no provision for his Maintenance, seems hard, and not very honourable to him, whose Servant he pretends to be ; especially considering, that they
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could not but know and foresee, how tender all Men naturally are in the matters of Honour and Maintenance; and of what mischievous consequence the leaving such a Question as this in the dark, and undetermined, would be: That it would involve the Church in endless strifes, and quarrels, and confusions. But will the Lay-Elder lay his Claim to a Maintenance, from that word in the Text, *viz. double Honour*; taking it for the Honour of *Maintenance*? Let him then read on the next verse there; *For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the Oxe that treadeth out the Corn: And the labourer is worthy of his reward.* The first of these Scriptures you have, *Deut. 25. 4.* which the Apostle makes use of, *1 Cor. 9. 9.* And you may see how he there applies it, only to the Ministers of the Gospel; *Those that sow unto the People spiritual things; V. 11. That minister about holy things, and wait at the Altar; V. 13.* The other Scripture you have, *Matth. 10. 10.* *The work-man is worthy of his meat:* Which are Christ's own words to the Twelve, when he sent them forth to Preach the Gospel.

Here's never a word of the Ruling Elder in all this, nor any provision made for him. And this one thing is enough to clear the sense of the precedent verse, that there is no such thing as the Ruling, Non-Preaching Elder intended in it; but the double Honour is for those that tread out the Corn, and labour in the LORD's Harvest in Word and Doctrine. And these are the only Persons spoken of in that, *1 Tim. 5. 17.*

So then; The Rulers of the People are their Pastors, who are to Rule, every one over his own particular Flock, or Congregation, in the things of God, and of their Souls; who, for the ease of their Government, and the advantage of their Ministerial work, have warrant from Scripture to ordain and appoint Deacons under them, and other necessary servile Officers, who derive their power immediately from their Pastor; are accountable to him; and may, and ought to be despos'd by him in case of Male-administration; as every Captain in an Army; Every Mayor in a Corporation; every Master in a Family have the proper power over their own Companies,

Companies, Burroughs, and Families, and all the inferiour Officers in them, to dispose and govern them for their good, according to the known and common Laws of that Superiour Government, under which they live, and unto which they themselves are accountable.

2. *The Rulers of the Pastors or Officers of the Church.* I am very apprehensive that this is a tender Point, wherein, I even tremble to think, that I must be either finfully silent, or declare my dissent from so many of my dear Brethren, whom I know to be otherwise Orthodox, Learned, Pious, and with whom I dare not compare my self. But I have said, and O that daily and doleful Experience did not proclaim it to the World, to the grief of some, and the shame of others, that there is no Company, or Society of Men in the World, that have more need of the strictest Government, than the Men of our Function; without which, we are, of all Mankind, in this respect, the most miserable; and the poor Church of Christ in the forelornest case of any of God's Creatures upon Earth. But certainly he that hath so provided

for the Government of the Kingdoms of the World, hath not left his own mystical Kingdom, wherein so much of his special interest lies, without such a Government, as is every way adequate to all the parts and concerns of it. He that hath taken such care to inclose and fence out the wild *Commons* of the World, hath not design'd to leave his own *Garden* uninclos'd ; Nor his *Vineyard* without a *Hedge* about it, and a *Wine-press* and a *Tower* in it.

How weak and insatisfactory is this, to say, that we are all the Ministers of Jesus Christ, and Brethren to one another ; that we have our Commission, as Ministers of the Gospel, from him (tho' not immediately from him, which indeed, if it were so, would alter the case) who is the Supream Legislator ? That we have our Bibles in our hands, and therein the unalterable Rules of our administration, both in Doctrine, Worship and Discipline ; the Laws, by which we are to Govern both our selves and the Churches ; that we have the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth ; and an *Uction* from the Holy One,

One, and know all things; that our Office and Work is Sacred and Divine; of God and not of Men; alas! will all this make us Infallible, or Absolute and Independent; exempt from all Laws and Bonds of an Ecclesiastical Polity; were we made the Ministers of Christ to rule, and not to be rul'd? O that men would consider the dismal consequents of such an Hypothesis, which I delight not now to aggravate.

But if there must be a Government among Pastors, consider'd as a distinct Body from the People; then, it will be said, there cannot be an equality, the Notion of Co-ordination of Pastors and Churches is subverted, this being inconsistent with Government. But let wise Men consider what that is that must needs lye at the bottom of this Levelling Principle. And yet Government doth not destroy the Equality and Co-ordination of Pastors, or Churches, as such, or *per se*; but only *secundum quid*; or in respect of Order; *e. g.* All the Captains in an Army, as Captains, are equal; so are all the Colonels, and all the other Officers, that are of one and the

the same Order; but between a Captain and a Collonel, there is an inequality: And as it is in a well Regimented Army; so it is in the Church of Christ, which is as an *Army with Banners*, Cant 6. 10. And 'tis supposed too, that this subordination of Pastors and Churches will conclude a necessity of a Supream Papal Head and Governour. This I take to be the great stumbling-block; the plain sense whereof is but this; That if every Minister be not allowed to be a Pope over his own Congregation, then there must be one Pope over all the Congregations and Pastors in the Christian World, Both which extreams are equally wide from the Truth, and perhaps equally pernicious to the Church. But to defend the Truth from both the *Horns* of this *Dilemma*, we will examine what is the true Scripture notions of a Church.

We find in Scripture that the Churches which the Apostles planted, are reckoned by the great Towns, or Cities, which they chose to begin to gather their Churches in, as appears both by the names that are given them, and by comparing *Act. 14. 23.* with *Tit. 1. 5.* where
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the ordinary Elders in every Church, is the same with Ordaining Elders in every City. Neither do we find any Organical Church of the Apostles founding, any where mention'd in the New Testament, but it bears the name of the Town or City, in which it was; besides those Domestick Churches of *Priscilla* and *Aquila*, of *Nymphas* and *Philemon*, which were equivocally call'd Churches, because some Congregations of the Believers did either occasionally, or statedly assemble to worship God there; or, as others think, because all of these Families were converted to Christianity, and so became Churches or Houses of God, which is little to our present Question. Besides, these Churches, thus planted by the Apostles in Towns and Cities, did still retain their first names and singularity: For one may always observe, that where the Scripture speaks of the Churches of a whole Province, or Countrey, it speaks of them as of different and distinct Churches, in the plural number, as the Churches of *Judea*, *1 Thes. 2. 14.* the Churches of *Asia*, *1 Cor. 16. 19.* the Churches of *Syria* and *Cilicia*, *Act. 15. 41.*

the Churches of *Galatia*, *1 Cor.* 16. 1. and *Gal.* 1. 2. and the Churches of *Macedonia*, *2 Cor.* 8. 1. because all these were large Countries, in which were many great Towns and Cities, in which the Churches were distinctly planted; and according to which they had their names and number. But when it speaks of the Christians in one Town, or City, it speaks of them as one Church, in the singular; as the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Act.* 8. 1. the Church of *Antioch*, *Act.* 13. 1. the Church of *Corinth*, *1 Cor.* 1. 2. So when the Churches of *Asia* are spoken of together, they are the seven Churches, according to the number and names of the seven great Cities of *Asia*, in which these Churches were planted; but when written to singly, it is the Church of *Ephesus*, and the Church of *Smyrna*, and the Church of *Sardis*, &c. And it is to be observed,

1. That this account never once fails in all the New Testament, which proves that it is not spoken indifferently, but industriously, and for our instruction.

2. That Churches were thus reckoned in the times of *John*, when he was in *Patmos*, which was 64 years after Christ;

Christ; in all which time, it is incredible, that all the Christians, in one of these great Cities, were no more than would make up one Congregation.

3. That there is no mention in the Scripture of any Churches planted in the Countreys adjacent to these Cities and Towns; yet it is rational to suppose, that there were many Converts, and some Congregations too in the Country-Villages, as well as in the great Towns; and therefore that these made up but one Church with that of the Town or City. Hence I conclude, that (these things being written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, for our admonition) a Church, and a Congregation are, in the language, and account of Scripture, two things. And that it is very unreasonable and unwarrantable to alter the first Constitution or Denomination of the Churches, as they were left us by the Apostles, as far as they went, and therein a Rule given us to do the like. 'Tis true, the Universal Church was once but one single Congregation at *Jerusalem*, and from which all the other Churches sprang, as so ma-

ny Daughters, on which account she is call'd *the Mother of us all*; but when other Churches were form'd, that at *Jerusalem* was no more the Universal Church; but only an integral part of it, and co-ordinate with other Churches; for its Universality was not of the Essence; but only a sperable adjunct of it; nor did she propagate these Churches, which afterward sprang from her, as she was Universal; but as she was a Church. And so all the Churches of the Apostles planting, were at first but single Congregations; yet it doth not thence follow, that every single Congregation is a Church. I mean, that which, in the Scripture is honour'd with the name of a Church; that is, the Presbyterial, Synodal, Classica, Diocesan, or Collegiate Church. I would not be thought to deny to the Congregational, or (as now they are call'd) Parochial Churches, any thing, either of name, or of privilege, that is their right; but will call them, for distinction sake, Pastoral Churches, and grant that they have a power of governing themselves, as such; as every Family hath a power and
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right to govern it self, and every Troop and Company in an Army, by their own proper Officers within their own Sphears, and cannot be legally impos'd on by other Family-Masters, or other Captains, with whom they are equal. But what Families are to Corporations, and these to Kingdoms, or Commonwealths; and what Troops, and particular Companies are to Regiments, and these to Armies; such are Congregations to Churches; that is, Presbyterial Churches, and these to the Universal. I am not now concerned to speak of the Church Universal, which is in Scripture call'd *The Church*; but of the Presbyterial, which alone is that, which in Scripture is call'd *a Church*, that is, a perfect and adult Church, that hath power by its Officers, to propagate and constitute other Churches and Congregations, and to over-rule all the particular Pastors of the Charges and Congregations, that are within its bounds and limits. This Presbyterial, or Collegiate Ruling Church must consist of a *pars Regens*, and a *pars Regenda*, all cannot be Rulers here, nor equally interested in the Power of Government;

vernment; that were *Democracy*, and but one little remove from *Anarchy*; neither can the Power rest in one single Person, that were absolute *Monarchy*, which is the common Parent of *Tyranny*; but it must therefore be a select number or *Collegium* of such of the Presbyters, or Ministers of the Gospel, as are best qualify'd with Age, Gravity, Experience, Learning, Piety, and especially Humility, Charity, Moderation and Contempt of the World, with an Holy Zeal and Diligence; which are the Qualifications the Scripture in this case requires. And this company of Ruling Presbyters in every such Church, must have one *Head*, or *President*, which is the *Episcopus Episcoporum*, or else it were a Monster, an heap of confusion and unorganiz'd matter. This Head must be *One*; else there can be no union nor consistency of the parts, nor attainment of its ends. This One Head must be *fixt* and constant, and that in the same Person, till there be just cause to change; else the Government cannot be steady, but is dissolved and broken, and consequently the Church, with all its particular Congregations, most dangerously expos'd. And this

this is that Government which is call'd *Aristocracy*, and may as properly be call'd a *mixt or limited Monarchy*; which I take to be most agreeable to the Pattern given us in the Mount of the holy Scriptures. And is so far from intrenching upon the Right, or infringing the Liberty or Government of the Church Congregational, that it is the best Defence to it, and as a strong Wall about it. 'Tis true, it may be abus'd; and what is there in the World that may not? but to plead against any Form of Government only from the Abuse of it, is Cavil, and not Argument.

From what hath been said, I conclude, that the *Presbyterial* and *Diocesan* Church, in the Essentials of their Constitutions, are one and the same thing. Tho' there be many Words and Names of things, that are become of ill Fame, thro' the Idolatry, Heresie, Superstition, Tyranny, and Immorality of a degenerate Age, yet the things that are signified by them are, in themselves good and necessary, and perhaps the very same that others plead for under other Names and Titles. And, could they be but once a-
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gain duly purg'd of these defilements, would be as glorious and useful, as of old they were in the Apostles and Primitive times. And if ever it be the good Will of God that the Church of *England* be once again Reform'd, in the Government and Discipline of it, according to Scripture, it must not be by plucking up and destroying that which is good; but by purging that which is foul and removing that which is burdensom and superfluous.

I am sorry to see, how cunningly some men's Logick can argue, from this Subordination of Congregational Pastors to Presbyterial, or Diocesan Presidents, or Super-intendents, a necessity of one Universal Papal Head, and not by the same Rules of their Logick argue it as consequentially necessary, from the Subordination of Officers in an Army, or Commonwealth, that there must be one Universal Humane Head and Monarch over all the Armies, or all the Nations in the World.

I confess, this Chapter hath drawn out more words, than I, at first, thought it should have done. Nor have I altogether pleas'd my self in the Method of it. For
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any accidental mistakes in the *Manner* of expressing my intended sense, I beg the pardon of my more critical Reader. But if any thing, on calm and impartial examination, appear, in the *Matter* of it, Heterodox to the Truth reveal'd and taught us in the Holy Scriptures, I shall readily acknowledge my error, and not take it as a shame to be made wiser.

The sum of what I have herein aim'd at, I shall now wind up in these eight Positions.

Posit. I. *That our LORD Jesus Christ hath not left his Church in the World, without a proper Government, of his own appointment for it.*

Pos. II. *That this Government is to be managed for, and under him, and by his Laws and Authority, by those into whose hands he hath delivered the Keys.*

Pos. III. *That Ruling Elders, distinct from all Preaching Elders and Deacons, are no Divine Ordinance in the Church of God, now under the New Testament.*

Pos. IV. *That every Pastor, lawfully ordain'd, and call'd to the Charge of a particular Congregation, hath a Divine Rights*

Right of executing the whole Office of a Pastor in and over that Congregation.

Pos. V. *That every Pastor of a Congregation, as such, is under the governing power of that Classical Presbytery, whereof he is, or ought to be a Member.*

Pos. VI. *That the Classical, or Diocesan Presbytery ought to be but a select number, and not the whole Body of that Classis, or Diocesis.*

Pos. VII. *That the Form and Power of Ruling Presbyteries ought to be fixt and constant, and not occasional only and intermittent.*

Pos. VIII. *That every Classical Presbytery ought to have a single Head or President, and which ought to be continued in that Office, quam diu bene se gesserit.*

C. A. P. VI.

*A few words of Counsel and Incon-
ment to the Lambs, the younger
sort.*

I Am now come to the last part of my
present Task; to speak a little to
the Flock, over which our LORD hath
set us; and

1. Will begin, as he himself hath
taught me, with the *Lambs*: And O that
I could now pour out my Soul into their
bosoms, and offer something that may
awaken and engage their chaste affections
to an early and serious minding of Christ,
and of their own Souls! I am not speak-
ing to those, who thro' want of years
are incapable, but to such as are able to
apprehend the words and counsels of
God from the Pulpit, or the Press. My
dear Lambs, you see what care our
LORD Jesus Christ hath taken of you.

1. He calls you *His*, what an Honour,
what a Happiness is this? If you be his,
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he will be yours, yours to all gracious ends and purposes; yours to love you, yours to provide for you, yours to protect you, yours to bless, to guide, to instruct, to own, to sanctifie, to save you. He will be a Friend, a Father, a Husband, an All, and better than all to you. Let who will forsake you, your God is unchangeable, he will never forsake you; yea, when all others forsake, then will he be every way best to you, you shall never want a Friend, while you have a Friend in Heaven. But remember, you cannot be so *His*, nor He *Yours*, without your voluntary, hearty, unreserved self-dedication to him. He will not be yours, without your deliberate choice, and free and full consent. If he be yours, it must be by Covenant, and by a Covenant of Salt, you must be his Covenant-Servants, and that for ever. He that putteth his hand to Gods Plough must not look back. Yea, you must be so his, as to be no more your own. If Christ be yours, he must be your LORD to rule and command you; his Will must be your Will, and his Word your Rule, and his Work your delight. O that

that this may help now to oblige and encourage you to offer your first, your best, your Bodies, your Souls, your all to the LORD!

2. He calls upon his *Lambs*. The Lambs are the Hope of the Flock, and the Joy of the Shepherd. None so welcome to him, as those that seek him sometimes, that devote the first fruits of their youth, and strength, and affections to him. It was *John*, the youngest Disciple that was the beloved one. *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, Jer. 2. 2.* Sirs, this is the day of your Visitation, behold now is the accepted time *quædam introductio, tempus complacentiæ, & gratuita receptionis: Behold now is the Day of Salvation.* This is your season, the day of Gods special Grace; which is true, not only of the day of the Gospel in general, but especially of the day of youth; this is the day of your greatest advantage, on very many accounts. Now is your time to lay the Foundations of your future Eternal happiness. If you lose this Season, you are, for ought you know, lost for ever. If you now be before hand with the Tempter,

Tempter, you will the more easily have him under your feet as long as you live. *I have written unto you young men, says the Apostle, because ye are strong, and have overcome the wicked one, I John 2. 13, 14.* if you do not now overcome him, you will be worse able to do it hereafter. As the Enemy grows stronger, you will find your selves grow weaker; yea, the more calls of God you reject in your youth, the nearer you are to that Curse, *Prov. 29. 1. He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* O do not presume on the leisure of Old Age! how many thousands are there that once refused to give God their youth, that are now spending their wretched old age in Hell? 'Tis as damnable a piece of Atheism as any, to account the dregs of our time and strength good enough for God, and for our own Souls. Be not deceived; tho' there were some called at the ninth, and at the eleventh hour, they were only such as had not been called before. Certainly 'tis a most dangerous, and almost desperate adventure to neglect the offers of Grace that are made in the days of youth. And O what care should

should you now take, how you lay your foundations ! Youth is in this respect, the most critical part of our lives ; as the foundation is that is then laid, such is the superstructure like to be. O 'twill be hard plucking up old Foundations, when once they are settled ! What is begun in Hypocrisie, is wont to end in Apostacy. Let not that reproachful Proverb be verifi'd in you, to the shame of your Profession, and the eternal ruine of your own Souls, *Young Saints, and old Devils.* If your first works be not sound as to the Principles both of Faith and Love, your end is like to be very sad and shameful. My dear Lambs ! are you Christs ? how should this oblige you to carry your selves, in all things, as becomes your relation to him ? Hath he pick'd and chosen you out of the World, and set his love upon you, and made a difference between you, and others ? O do not walk, nor talk, nor attire your selves then like the vain ones of the World ! if the difference between you and others, as to your Spiritual Estates be real, let it be visible too in your Carriage and whole Conversation. *As obedient Children, not fashioning*

fashioning your selves according to the former
 lusts in your ignorance. 1 Pet. 7. 14. *μὴ συγκατα
 ἑσμεναι*; not decking and moding your selves
 according to the humours and manners of
 those, whose lusts are their rule, and whose
 exalted heads do but proclaim the folly
 and pride of their hearts. O let not Christ's
 lambs be the world's apes! Let the world
 behold your chaste conversation coupled with
 fear, 1 Pet. 3. 2. The 7th Commandment is
 violated by the unchastity of habit and
 gesture, as well as by words or actions:
 there is a whorish Attire, as well as a
 whorish eye and a whorish tongue, and
 a whorish heart. 'Tis not enough for
 Christ's lambs, not to be such, but they
 must not be like them. Abstain from all ap-
 pearance of evil, 1 Thes. 5. 22. Hating even the
 garment spotted by the flesh, Jud. 23. As the
 Menstruous Garment was ceremonially un-
 clean under the Law, so is the Meretrici-
 ous Garment much more spiritually, or mo-
 rally unclean under the Gospel; Whose ad-
 orning let it not be that outward adorning of
 plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and
 of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hid-
 den man of the heart, in that which is not cor-
 ruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet
 spirit,

spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4. I do not think that the Apostle doth here declaim against the use of these things, nor that he doth advise that Christians, or Professors should have a mode or fashion in their Apparel different from all others. Cloathing is appointed of God, not only for covering, but for decency, and ornament, and for distinction of Sexes and Callings, and degrees amongst men; but he forbids and condemns that immoderate care, and cost, and curiosity that is used in these things, to the neglect of the better part, which is of infinitely higher concern: And he forbids too, their imitating and symbolizing with the world in the cuts and fashions, and gallantry of their immodest pride and vanity; as the Lord did of old forbid his people to be like the Idolatrous Heathen, in the trimmings of their heads and Beards, Levit. 19. 27. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads; neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Not but that this fashion was in it self indifferent, but because it was the manner of the Idolatrous Nations, and particularly of the Egyptians, from whom he had now delivered

vered them; therefore he would not suffer his *Israel* to be herein like them. 'Tis not simply the fashion, but the height and extremity of it, wherein the pride and levity, and consequently the sin doth lye.

I am loth to raise Objections for you; but perhaps you have heard some that are willing to plead for this Idol, say, that there is evidently as great a pride in those, that are at the widest distance from the Modes and Fashions of the Times, as in those that are fondest of them. It may be so; but alas, is this Argument, or Recrimination? How unreasonable is it to think to justify the pride, and sin of one extream by that of another? Or, would you say, That you have herein the Example of many very pious, serious and knowing Christians? I shall only reply thus; The more pity. But that which I doubt more of, is this; You are afraid you shall be censur'd and talk'd of; yet how poor a thing is this? let those that will laugh at you now, laugh if they can at last, when you shall stand on the right hand, and they on the left. But he or she that can't bear a
flout

flout, or a jeer, or scorn for *Christ*, from the Fools of the World; that will not be perswaded to part with a pin, or a rag for him, is very unworthy of him. O let not the Daughters, nor the Sons of *Zion*, in such a day as this, wherein God hath been so long, and so many ways humbling us; when his hand is lifted up, and his Sword drawn, and bath'd in the blood of the slain; when he is so loudly calling us to Sackcloth and Ashes, and deep humiliation, tempt him to execute the Threatnings of *I/a. 3.* upon the Wantons of this Generation. Let not the *Forebears*, that should be mark'd with weeping and mourning, be mark'd with the provocations of divine indignation.

3. He hath charg'd us to feed his *Lambs*. And in obedience to his commands, and compassion to your souls, we are willing, and alway ready to draw out our Breasts to you. O how pleasant is it to suckle our little ones! what a comfort is it to hear you enquiring after God, and asking us the serious questions, that savour of a work of grace upon your hearts! How doth this endear you to us, and make us even proud of you? of whom we may say, as
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the *Apostle* of his beloved *Thessalonians*, *Eph. 2. 19, 20.* For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoycing, are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord *Jesus Christ* at his coming? For ye are our glory, I say. 'Tis a comfort to us to hear you so readily and cheerfully answering our questions, in what you have learnt, either from your *Catechises*, or from our *Sermons*; but it would be a greater comfort to us to answer your *Questions*; either for the information and rectifying of your *Judgments*; the regulation of your *Practice*, or the satisfaction of your doubting *Consciences*. By this we should see how you grow and improve in the *Faith*, and that our *Labours* with, and for you, are not in vain in the Lord.

4. He hath charg'd us, as we love him, to have an especial care of you. May not this assure you how dear you are to him? and should not this both engage, and encourage you in your work? My dear Children, 'Tis our love to *Christ*, and to your souls, that alone is able to sweeten our work to us. Tho we travel in birth again with you, till *Christ* be formed in you, yet never did your Mothers

thers more willingly endure the pains of their Travel for you, nor more joyfully embrace you, from the Womb of the natural birth, than we would do from the Womb of the New-birth. As there is joy in a Family at the living birth of a Son, or of a Daughter, so there is joy both in Heaven above, and in the Heaven of the Church here below, at the conversion of a sinner unto God. O let us share in this heavenly joy over you, and be able to say, in the day of his comings *Behold, we, and the children whom the Lord hath given us.* But I must not insist here.

CHAP. VII.

The Peoples Duty.

BEAR with me while I speak a few words to those whom I mean by the Sheep; the more adult, and aged sort of professors: Which I shall comprize as briefly as I can, in these six Particulars.

1. Doth Christ own you for his *Sheep*? Should not you then own him for your *Shepherd*? And if so, should you not know his voice, and be able to discern it from the voice of a stranger? Sirs, your Shepherd is but one, tho your inferior Pastors and Teachers be many, and his voice in them all is one and the same: If they speak not with his Voice, they are not of his sending. There are many Thieves and Robbers in the world, that come in Sheeps clothing, and wear a rough garment to deceive; and many there are that are deceived by them: 'Twas so from the beginning, ever since Satan hath transform'd himself into an Angel of Light; and so it will ever be, 'till he be bound, and cast into the bottomless pit. But those that are his, know his voice, and a Stranger will they not follow. This is one of the *Propria quarto modo* of his Sheep; they have an *Unction from the holy one*, and know all things; that is, all things that are absolutely necessary to salvation. Not that they are infallible, as to the Circumstan- tials, and lesser matters of Religion; herein they may be, and too often are deceived.

deceived. Hence are those diversities of opinion that are among them, and those scandalous unbrotherly dissensions, that are the effects of them: But this diversity is not in the Shepherd's Voice, but in their apprehensions, and the measures of their capacities, and attainments: But the more perfectly the Shepherd's Voice is known, the less there will be of this diversity of apprehension and strife about it. And yet this variety of opinion in the Circumstantials, would hardly deserve to be accounted a blemish in the mystical body, were it not for that selfishness, that is commonly the root, and that uncharitableness, that is the fruit of it. But besides this, it is shameful and sad to consider, how many there be, that have been all their lives, even to old age flock'd and folded among the Sheep of Christ, under the same ordinances, and spiritual enjoyments with others, and yet understand very little of the Shepherds voice, that are ever learning, *and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 2 Tim. 3. 7. That for want of Principles, are like children tossed to and fro, and carried

away with every wind of Doctrine; or whose minds are like sieves, that retain nothing, but the earthly grosser sort of things. *Who for the time, ought to be Teachers, but yet have need that one teach them again, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God, Heb. 5. 12.* Such Sheep are the shame of such a Shepherd.

Again; If you are his Sheep, should you not hear, and hearken to his Voice, and delight in his Presence with you? Should you not come at his Call, and go at his Bidding, and his Word be a Law with you? *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me, Job. 10. 27.*

2. Is he your Shepherd? O how should you love him then? 'Tis natural for Sheep to love their Shepherd; but though in this case, it be indeed supernatural, yet it is, of all things in the World, the most reasonable. He is not only your Shepherd, to feed, and to protect, and provide; but your Saviour, and Redeemer, to die for you. *I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the Sheep, Job. 10. 11.* We must have perisht eternally, but for him. 'Twere endless to enumerate all the reasons we have

have to love him; which way soever we look upon him, in his Person, in his Offices, in his Graces; in what he hath done, in what he hath suffered, in what he hath purchased, in what he hath promised, in what he hath prepared for us; he is altogether lovely. Yea, as the Sun is all Light; so is Christ all Love to his Saints. His Word are his Love-Letters to them; his Ordinances his Love-Feasts with them; and all his Providences, both Crosses and Comforts, are the Seals of his Love to them. The more we seriously think of him, or of our selves; the more we shall see it both reasonable and necessary to love him. We cannot love our selves truly, unless we love him sincerely. *If any man love not the LORD Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha, 1 Cor. 16. 22.* one of the most accursed Wretches, that are out of Hell. *O love the LORD, all ye his Saints; for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer, Psal. 31. 23.* 'Tis our Duty; 'tis our Interest; and, if we are Saints indeed, 'tis our Property to love him. God is Love; where there is most of

Love, there is most of God, and most of a Christian. Where Love dwells, there God dwells; and where God is, there is Heaven. The glorified Life above is a Life of perfect Love. Love will make you a Heaven upon Earth; a Heaven of Holiness, and a Heaven of Joy and Peace. O in what holy Order is every thing kept, in that heart, where the Love of Christ reigns! every inordinate Affection, and irregular Passion suppress'd; every Temptation easily resisted and repelled; the whole Frame and Oeconomy of the Soul under the power and sweet Influences of Love. And O the heavenly Peace and Serenity that is there! what a calm is there, where the Love of Christ commands all! What a Banquet of Spiritual Joy is that Soul feasting on with her Beloved! her heart is at rest in him; all the burden of her cares and fears are devolved upon him; the poor Soul rides safely at Anchor, and is careful for nothing. O Sirs! 'Tis not so where the Love of the World, and the Lusts of the Flesh rule; there's the Hell of vile affections, spiritual filthiness, ungodly counsel, and courses:
There

There are the storms and tempests, the restless, foaming waves of carnal desires, and worldly cares, and fears, and fretful discontents: 'Tis a miserable life that the worldling lives. *The wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, Isa. 57. 20.* And 'tis our sin and folly, that we are so like them. The Love of Christ would help all this. Yea, do you not profess to love him? and would you not be offended with him that should question it? But what is Profession without proof? If you love him, you will obey him, and none of his Commandments will be grievous to you. Love is bountiful; nothing will be too much, or too dear for him: The Love that is genuine, is generous, If you love him, you will love all of him. his Image, his Company, his Ordinances, his Ministers, his Ways. But I must refer you to others, for the Marks of the Sincerity of your Love to him.

3. Are you his *Sheep*? Should you not then *love one another*? The Sheep is a sociable creature, extreamly fond of their fellows. O let not Christ's Sheep be Wolves and Tygers to one another. A

new Commandment I give you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you; that ye also love one another; Joh. 13. 34. Be ye followers of God, as dear Children, and walk in love, as Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us; Ephes. 5. 1, 2. See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; 1 Pet. 1. 22. We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the Brethren. He that loveth not his Brother abideth in death; 1 Joh. 3. 14. There hath been enough spoken and written on this Subject. One of the commonest Themes, of a most contentious Age. But alas! words are wind, and the wind hath but blown the Coals. And Love is no Salamander; it cannot live in the Fire; yea, though it be it self a fire, it is from above, of another nature and original, whose flame will not unite, nor conspire with those heterogeneous smotherers which are from beneath. How partial and private-spirited is the Charity of most of the hottest Zealots in every Party? that cannot overcome the prejudices of their Ignorance, Interest or Education; but with pettish *Jonah*, think they do well to be angry. O that men
knew

knew better what spirit they are of. The Flock of Christ are not all of one complexion, nor of one Drove, nor of one manner of Discipline in Circumstantial. Those that have many Sheep, have some fat, and some lean; some that are kept more strictly in their fenced Fields, others that feed and range at greater liberty, on the course, and cold, and short Downs, and Commons; yet have they all but one common Nature, one Name, one Mark, and one Master. So it is with the Flock of Christ in this their imperfect state: There are some that are not so clean, nor so sound as others; yet they are Sheep, and his Sheep, and must, as such, be loved and pitied, and not hated, or scorned, or disowned by us. I have sometimes wondered at the reason, why Dissentions on Religious accounts are always wont to be most fierce and implacable: It cannot be because Man, in this his lapsed estate, is so Religious a Creature; no, 'tis the Enemy that hath the most deep and mischievous Design in it; 'tis Pride, and Envy, and Superstition, that is the *Fomes* of the Mine, to which the Devil lays his Train, under

under colour of Religion, to blow up Religion, and all that depends upon it in the World. The Enemy fears not much what hurt Religion can do his interest in the world, if he can but blow up the charity of those that profess it: For what doth Faith signify without love, by which it works?

4. Are you his Sheep? Should you not then be very tender of your own Lambs? There is hardly any kind of Creature, but is fond of their young; and if in any case they will be fierce, 'tis in their defence. *Even the Sea Monsters draw out the breasts, they give suck to their young ones,* Lam. 4. 3. O let not those that are called Christians, be like the *Ostriches* in the *Wilderness*, and forget that their poor Children have souls as well as bodies to be cared for. Those that are evil know how to give good gifts to their Children. They know how to feed them when they are hungry; how to cloath them when they are naked; how to physick them when they are sick; how to instruct them in their worldly business, and how to bestow them for their worldly advantage: And herein there are few so unnatural,

but

but that they are diligent enough according to their ability and understanding ; and if this be all you do for yours, what do ye more than others : You rejoyce perhaps in that they are born, and you can call them yours, but what can you hope for from them ? what comfort can you promise your selves in them, if they be not new born ? If you provide only for their bodies, their baser and mortal part, what do you for them more than for your Hogs, or Cattel, which you are careful to feed, and make fat for the day of slaughter ? Can you without terror think of their being damn'd ? Should you not do your utmost then to prevent it ? Do you not know that they are by Nature the Children of Wrath ? And that you were the Instruments of bringing them into this condition ? Are you not bound in Justice then, with all your Care and Diligence to endeavour their Deliverance ? How can you believe this, and not be concerned for them ? 'Tis true, we your Pastors are bound by the command of Christ to feed them ; but are not you equally bound both by the Bonds of Grace and Nature, to begin,
and

and to assist with us in that work ? Time forbids me, tho' my bowels urge me to enlarge here. O let not Reformation dye, at half way, with this Generation; but let what we have striven, and pray'd, and suffered, and so long waited for, be, by Gods blessing on your faithful diligence, and utmost endeavours conveyed, with advantage, to the next. Tho' God can, of Stones, raise up Children unto *Abraham*, yet you may not expect, that he shall work Miracles for those, that live in the neglect of known duty.

5. Are you his Sheep, and committed by him, who is both our LORD and Master and yours, to us, to feed and to rule for him? Should you not then *hearken to us*, and own the authority, where-with we are entrusted for your good? Remember, we must give our accounts shortly, and so must you. Whether ever I shall meet you again in this Place, God knows; but am sure, that we shall one day meet again in a far greater assembly than this. When the sight of them that have here, or elsewhere, laboured with and for you, will be either very comfortable, or unexpressibly terrible,

rible, on the account of the Testimony, that must then be produced by them, either for or against you. 'Tis true, we are not Lords over you, nor do we pretend so to be ; yet are we appointed of Christ to be your Officers, not only to teach, admonish, reprove, rebuke, exhort, and encourage you ; but to lead, and rule, and govern, to warn. and charge and command you in the LORD, in all things that concern our Office. If every transgression and disobedience, under the Law of *Moses*, received a just recompense of reward, can you hope to escape under the Gospel ? Sirs, it hath been for your sakes, that we have endur'd the contradictions of men ; have been ejected, deprived, banished, imprison'd reviled, &c. and wherein you your selves have suffered with us ; yet all this we have born with patience, and desire from our Hearts to forgive and forget ; but O let not your hands be now against us ; this will be worse, and harder to be born, than all the evil that hath befallen us from our youth, nor can you hope that it will be taken well by our common LORD and Master. While we were removed

removed into corners with you, we seem'd to be very dear to you; but, let me tell you, if you once more provoke him to remove us, he will, I doubt put us farther from you, where you shall never see us more. If your Liberty be a Snare to you, you may expect that God shall, to your sorrow, break this Snare for you. We have been your Servants, and so we are still, and delight to be, the Servants of your Faith; but God forbid, that any thing should ever tempt us to be the Servants of your Lusts, or of your evil humours; this we are requir'd to declare and protest against, and to exercise the Rod of Evangelical Discipline; for our LORD hath put the *Keys* of his Kingdom, and *Rod* of his Government into our hands, to rule under him, and for him, in the affairs of your Souls; the Government is *His*, and not *Ours*; if you will not that this man shall Reign over you; if you will yet kick at his Yoke, and break his bonds; look to it, for, evil is before you. *O give glory to the LORD your God before he cause Darkness, and before your Feet stumble on the dark Mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn*

it into the Shadow of Death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my Soul shall weep in secret places for your Pride, and mine Eye shall weep sore, Jer. 13 16, 17. But I hope God will have mercy yet, for his own sake, upon the Remnant of his People, and will at length bow their Hearts to the obedience of the Gospel.

6. Once more; Are you his Sheep, whom he hath committed to our Pastoral care? Let me tell you, *We shall not, we cannot, be with you always.* Your Fathers, where are they? And the Prophets, do they live for ever? There are enough, you know, that wish the World were rid of us, in whose account we are the troublers of *Israel*. It would send our Gray Hairs with sorrow to the Grave, to think with whom we should leave these few Sheep in this Wilderness, were there not a prospect of a Succession. You know where the Curse of *Eli's* House lies; Put me, I pray thee, into one of the Priests Offices, that I may eat a piece of Bread. But where there is no Preferment, there is no Ambition. There are few that offer themselves with us, to the work of the House of the LORD,
but

but those that have nothing but an Heart, and a good Will to offer. And indeed, these are they, may we but have enough of these, that are most likely to do Gods Work. Had Avarice and Ambition never found any such thing, as a Bait, or Temptation of this kind, in this Sacred Office, further than the double Honour, that is due to double Merits, it might have been much happier with the Churches, than now it is. 'Twas Worldly Riches and Grandeur, which the Clergy, of all men in the World, are worst able to bear, as that which is most unsuitable to the Nature of their Holy Calling; that was the great Engine, which thro' the Pride and Covetousness of Prelates, and the blind Zeal and Superstition of Princes and Bigots, first overthrew both the Purity and the Peace of the Churches. Nor is the Fire ever like to go out, while the fewel-holds. But God hath delivered us from this Temptation; and perhaps this is not the least of the Mercies we have to blefs him for; at least, if he have taught us therewith to be content, and to live by Faith for our daily Bread. But when we are
laid

laid in the Dust, as shortly we shall, who are they that shall fill our Places? God will provide, but not from among the Dead, nor by Miracle. You know on whose Pious Zeal and Ability, under God, this Succession necessarily depends. If then you be not weary of us as of your Burden; if you account us faithful, and serviceable; that our Light and Labours among you have been of any good Use, or Value, to save you hitherto from that black Night of Superstition and Idolatry, that hath so long hover'd over us; And if this be a blessing, that you would entail to your Posterities after you; then set your Hearts and Hands to this Work, and lay out something, to your power, as God hath blessed you, and as you hope for his blessing, for the Souls of your Children and Survivors, tho' you should (and yet you have no reason to doubt you shall) have the less to lay up for their perishing part. O Sirs, 'tis for Christ's and for your sakes, that we have deny'd our selves, as we have done; had we aim'd at our worldly advantage, and taken up the Ministry for a Lively-hood, we were of all men in the World, some of the most mistaken

staken and worst advis'd ; we might easily have found other ways enough, to have bestow'd our time, and strength and learning on, to better purpose that way ; but in the service of your Souls we are ready to Sacrifice these our Worldly Interests and hope that you will never give us cause to repent of it. And if we have laid down our all at your feet ; it is but reasonable and just, that you should lay down something, as the primitive Christians did, at the Apostle's Feet, for the necessary Use, and Service of the Church ; that so when we, who are now grown old, and going out of the Vineyard, shall dye, that which you now profess to prize as your Priviledge and Happiness, may not dye with us. 'Tis for your sakes, and not my own, that I have now mentioned this thing.

C A P. VIII.

The Consolatory Conclusion.

I Shall now conclude all, with a word of *incouragement*, both to Ministers, and People.

1. To

1. *To Ministers*; and that on a double account.

1. In that God hath accounted us faithful, and put us into the Ministry, and called us unto this Heavenly work, than which there is none greater, none sweeter in the World. That he hath taken us so near to him, and entrusted us with the Bread of his Family, the care of his Children, and all the precious Jewels of his House, the unsearchable Riches of Christ. O what an honour is this! that poor, despised, unworthy we, should be called, not the Sons of God only, but the Stewards, the Ambassadors, the Angels of the Most High; that we should be taken into so near a relation to him, made the keepers of his Counsels, his Treasurers, his Oratours and Intercessours, the deputed Governours of his Spiritual Kingdom in the World. Behold what manner of love is this. what a happiness, what a Priviledge is it? There are some of us, who, for ought we know, had never been sincerely and savingly serious, had not our Holy Calling given us the blessed occasion. How had we been buried in the dirty business, and

care

cares and snares of the World, had not the LORD set his merciful eye upon us, and chosen us to walk with him? What were we better than the rest of Mankind? what hath he foreseen in any of us, that he should make this difference? Blessed be Christ Jesus our dear LORD for this, Be it hard, yet 'tis happy work. *I had rather be a Door-Keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of wickedness; rather a Porter there, than a Potentate in the Earth.* The Church is Gods lower Heaven, as contemptible as it is in the eyes of blind and prejudiced Men; and the lowest place in this Heaven is, on many accounts, preferable to the highest Worldly Seats among the Children of Men.

2. Hath our LORD and Master taken care for his Lambs, and for his Sheep, and will he not also care for us? Must we feed his Flock and will not He feed us? Hath he not done it for these 30 years & more, and that beyond what we had any visible grounds to have hoped? *When I sent you without Purse, and Scrip, and Shoes, lacked ye any thing? Luke 22. 35.* When there were so few that would adventure to know us, and fewer that could relieve

us; did we want our daily Bread? Tho' our Tables were not spread, as once they had been, yet were they ever sweeter to us than then? In our Exilements, in our Prisons, was not our God with us still? When we were walking thro' the valley of the Shadow of death, did not his Rod and his Staff comfort us? yea, when was it better with us than when we had least of the World? and after all this sensible experience, shall we not trust him? Fear not, he that will have his Sheep fed, will not have his Shepherds starved. The World hath seen the effect of our *Water* and *Pulse*, let them still see that we can be content with a little, that we have not taught the Doctrine of contentment to others, further than we are willing to practice it our selves. And O that nothing that hath the appearance of a covetous or ambitious humour may ever be found any more in any of us. Let our Masters work be our grand concern, and then we know we have reason to trust him for all these little things.

3. *To the People:* With what confidence of Faith, and gladness of heart may you even in this Wilderness, sing *David's Psal.*

Pfal. 23. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. The Charge here given in my Text was, and is intended to run parallel with all succeeding ages. As long as Christ hath a Flock in the World, he will find or make those that shall feed it : Let the Enemy show his skill, and the gates of hell do their worst, there's never a Soul of Christ's purchasing shall perish. He would not have bid you to pray the Lord of the Harvest to send forth Labourers into his Harvest, had he not a mind to answer those Prayers. Only remember ; he that hath taught and encourag'd you so to pray ; expects that you shall second your Prayers with your best Endeavours. You may not hope that God shall send you Labourers out of Heaven at free cost ; but your hands must evidence the good agreement between your hearts and lips, in these your Prayers. 'Tis for the Elects sake that the World continues to this day, and while God hath a world here, he will have a people in it ; and unto whom he will always provide those that shall break the bread of Life ; tho he may, and sometimes sees it good to distress, yet will he never desert them : He may free 'em, but will never forsake them, never forget them. *Comfort ye one another with these words.* F I N I S.